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CHURCH DOCTRINE,

BIBLE TRUTH.

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CHURCH DOCTRINE,

BIBLE TRUTH.

BY THE

REV. M. F. SADLER, M.A.

PREBENDARY OF WELLS, AND VICAR OF ST. PAUL'S, BEDFORD;
AUTHOR OF "THE SECOND ADAM AND THE NEW BIRTH,"
"SACRAMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY," ETC.

"I am the Vine, ye are the branches."

"Holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God."

"Exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature."

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PREFACE.

In the following treatise, I have endeavoured to set forth what God, in His holy word, teaches us respecting Church principles, and then I have turned to the Prayer-book, in order to ascertain how far it reflects the teaching of the Scriptures.

This book is not intended to be a treatise on the Prayer-book, or on the Church and Sacraments in their relations to the rest of Christianity, much less is it intended to embrace the whole circle of Christian doctrine and practice.

My one purpose in writing it has been to show that all distinctive Church doctrine is found in the Bible, and that the particular statements of that doctrine in the Prayer-book, which a large number of religious Englishmen affect to treat as unscriptural, are the mere echo of certain Scripture statements; so that, so far as the matters treated of in this book are concerned, there is no difficulty whatsoever attaching to any assertion contained in the Prayer-book; all difficulties of this kind resolving themselves into mysteries inherent in certain assertions of God in His Holy word.

The Prayer-book has too often been assumed to need apology, on account of what it teaches respecting the

effects of the Sacraments and the functions of the ministry, whereas if it did not contain the doctrine in question it would be indefensible, because it would not, so far, embody the teaching of Scripture.

The Prayer-book most assuredly does not add to the force of any statement contained in the Bible respecting the Sacraments or the ministry of the Church; and I trust that it does not take away from the force of any such statement.

From what we know of their history and theological leanings, it is not at all likely that our Reformers would have handed down to us the Church truth which we possess, unless they felt that the Scripture evidence for it was too decisive to be either explained away or ignored.

Much less would they have been likely to overstate any Sacramental or Church truth, and they certainly have not.

With respect to the chapter on the Baptismal Offices (chap. iii.), a word of explanation is due to those who may be already in possession of my published treatise on the subject of Regeneration in Baptism.

In a chapter in which I aim at showing that our Baptismal Services embody Scripture truth, I have, of course, been obliged to use the same arguments as in the former treatise.

I trust, however, that the reader will find them put, as far as possible, into a new shape, expressed in different words, and so arranged as best to bear upon the illustration of our Baptismal Offices.

I had, at first, intended to have done little more than refer the reader to my other books. I was, however, very

strongly advised to write independently on the matter of Baptism, so that the purchasers of this present work might have in it a sort of hand-book on the Scripture grounds of all Church doctrine.

This it could hardly pretend to be if such a subject as Baptism was not treated in it with that fulness which its importance demands.

If the Sacramental statements in the Prayer-book are in accordance with God's word, it follows—

1. That a very large number of religious persons are holding aloof from, or actively opposing the Church of this country, simply because it strictly adheres to Scripture truth in its formularies of faith and worship.

Every bitter word shot against certain unpopular truths is, in fact, shot against Christ; for the first and fullest teaching of these truths is in the very words of Christ Himself.

2. That a very large number of religious persons who profess to adhere to the Church of England, are habitually explaining away these Church truths and the Scripture statements on which they are founded, on precisely the same rationalistic grounds on which others are making void every assertion of God's word which involves a miracle, or the existence of an angel.

If men treat the Scriptures as virtually uninspired when they reveal the Sacramental, how can they judge those who set the same Scriptures aside when they reveal the miraculous?

3. That they to whom God in His mercy has been pleased to reveal these truths, should be most careful to

set them before their brethren in a Scripture form, and, as far as possible, in Scripture language; and it behoves them not hastily to cast such truths on ground unfitted to receive them, but to prepare the minds of others for their reception, by the constant inculcation of the principles on which they are founded; and, above all, by showing the practical results which the Apostles themselves make to depend upon them.

It behoves them, too, to weigh well every word in which they strive to commend them to their brethren, lest it seem overstrained, or unreal, or at manifest variance with other clearly revealed truths, and so give occasion of stumbling to the weaker brethren, and of wilful misrepresentation to the adversaries.

Above all, it behoves those who "know these things," to pray very earnestly and constantly, that the Great Head of the Church may give to all His people faith to apprehend the things pertaining to His mystical Body, and boldness to confess them when apprehended. For with respect to these things, as well as to all others which belong to Christ, His saying holds good—

"He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you."

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CHURCH DOCTRINE,—BIBLE TRUTH.

CHAPTER I.

THE SCRIPTURE GOSPEL.

"*Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures: and that He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: . . . last of all He was seen of me also: . . . therefore, whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.*" (1 Cor. xv. 1—11.)

"*The Gospel of God (which He had promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures,) concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.*" (Rom. i. 1—4.)

"*Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ*

should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles." (Acts xxvi. 22, 23.)

"*The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.*" (St. Mark i. 1.)

"*Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my Gospel.*" (2 Tim. ii. 8.)

THE great work of the Church of Christ is to set forth the Gospel of her Lord. If He has committed His truth to our keeping, it is for us to see that that truth is retained by us in its fulness, and transmitted by us unimpaired. It is plain also that if God has set forth the Gospel in some particular form, we must adhere to that form, and not substitute for it any other form which may seem to the eye of man more spiritual or more practical.

God best knows how to draw souls to Himself. He, and He only, sees in what way they can be most effectually moulded to suit His purposes. If He gives to us one aspect of His truth rather than another, we may rest assured that He has some all-sufficient reason for His choice, and so the Church must make it her first care to present the Gospel to men in that form in which she has received it from God.

The word "Gospel" in the New Testament is applied exclusively to the announcement of certain events occurring at a particular time in the history of the world. These are, the Incarnation, Birth, Baptism, Temptation, Ministry, Miracles, Betrayal, Condemnation, Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Jesus. This is the meaning of the word "Gospel" in the opening sentence of St. Mark's Gospel. This is its meaning in the opening sentence of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, where the Apostle speaks of himself as "separated unto the Gospel of God,

concerning His Son Jesus Christ, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead."

When St. Paul, in another place, declares in so many words in what this Gospel consists—the Gospel which he preached, and by which his converts were saved,—he declares it to be the record of three facts, "that Christ died for our sins, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day." (1 Cor. xv. 1—6.)

If this be the aspect under which the Gospel is set before us in the New Testament, then a Church which would set forth the Gospel as it is contained in Scripture must adhere to this Scripture form of it. It is not given to any Church to assume to be more spiritual than God's Holy Spirit—so as, in place of the sequence of events recorded in Scripture as "the Gospel," virtually to substitute a sequence of certain doctrines beginning (say) with the secret decree of God respecting the election of the individual soul, proceeding to set forth the effectual calling, conversion, and justification of that soul so elected, and culminating in the present assurance of its salvation.

Presenting the Gospel under such a form as this would not be scriptural, for the Scriptures do not set forth this as the Gospel. I am not denying that all this (or something like it) respecting individual election, calling, justification, and sanctification, is to be found in Scripture, or to be inferred from some Scripture statements. I am pronouncing no opinion upon it, except that it is not presented in Scripture as "the Gospel."

The Gospel does not appear in Scripture under the aspect of certain dealings of God with the individual soul apart from its fellow souls. It does appear as certain events or outward facts having to do with the Second Person in the Ever-Blessed Trinity, viz.—the Incarnation,

Birth, Life, Death, Burial, Resurrection, and Ascension of the Son of God.

Let us first dwell somewhat on the proof of this which we derive from God's word.

First of all, by far the greater part of the New Testament is occupied with the history or life of Jesus of Nazareth, commencing with His Incarnation and ending with His Ascension.

Secondly, in the doctrinal or hortatory part, viz. the Epistles, the leading events recorded in this historical part are always referred to as constituting "the Gospel," to the utter exclusion of any more doctrinal or abstract form of Divine truth; and also to the exclusion of any expressions denoting God's particular love to individual souls.

First, then, by far the greater part of the New Testament is occupied with the record of certain outward historical facts relating to Jesus of Nazareth.

In order to impress the great outlines of this history the deeper upon men's minds, God has caused this historical part to take the shape of four memoirs, or biographical notices; three of them going over substantially the same ground.

Instead of one life of Christ containing all particulars in chronological order, God has given to us four, which, owing to small apparent discrepancies, we cannot weave together into one connected narrative; so that we cannot make one perfect Gospel narrative or harmony, but are obliged to read or study the four separately. Literary unity, and the exactness which characterises a single well-digested narrative, or memoir, are thus sacrificed, and the charge of repetition is incurred; but all this is as nothing, for the intention of Almighty God is carried out, which is, that our minds should be saturated with the account of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of His dear Son.

If repetition had been avoided, as it would have been in any book compiled to please men, the evangelic narrative might have been compressed so as to fill not half the space which it now occupies, and so more room would have been left for purely doctrinal teaching; but, instead of this, we have the same incidents presented to us three or four times, so that our minds and memories must perforce retain them—retain, that is, the Gospel of salvation in the narrative or outward objective form in which God has been pleased to embody it.

Let us now examine more particularly the Gospels, with a view to this.

First of all, let us take the Gospel of St. Matthew. The first chapter of this Gospel has always formed the opening page of the Book of God's New Covenant.

It is occupied, first, with a genealogy of the Saviour; secondly, with a notice of His Incarnation and Birth expressed in the plainest and barest terms conceivable.

The second chapter contains the visit of the Magi, the slaughter of the Innocents, and the flight into Egypt. The third contains the account of the preaching of Christ's forerunner, and His own baptism by the hands of this forerunner. The fourth, the account of Christ's temptation, and the call of the Apostles.

Such is the opening of the New Testament.

Now I ask the reader, Is such an opening of God's final and perfect revelation such as he would have expected, if, that is, he were guided in his expectation of what God's revelation was likely to be by that form of doctrine which, since the time of the Reformation, has undoubtedly taken most hold of the religious mind of this country? I am sure that it is not. A greater contrast cannot be imagined than that presented by the first part of the New Testament, and the

corresponding part of any treatise on religion which you may choose to take up.

But we pass on to St. Mark. This Gospel commences with the words, "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God."

These words form part of the sacred text, consequently we have here the Holy Spirit's testimony to the fact that what St. Mark wrote was "The Gospel." But this Gospel, of all the four, contains by far the barest narrative of facts. There is from the beginning to the end of it not one evangelical remark, in the modern or popular sense of the word "evangelical."

We next come to St. Luke. In the few prefatory verses we are told that his object in writing was that a certain Christian named Theophilus might "know the certainty of the things in which he had been instructed."

St. Luke also incidentally mentions that many other writers had "taken in hand to set forth a declaration of those things which were most surely believed by" the Apostolic Christians, "even as they delivered them who from the beginning were eye-witnesses."

We learn then from this short preface what were the things which formed the substance of Apostolic teaching; of the teaching, *i.e.* of those who from the beginning were eye-witnesses. We learn what those things were which were "most surely believed," and in which the first converts were "instructed."

And what were these things? The birth of the Baptist; the Annunciation by an Angel of the Incarnation; the birth of Jesus; the adoration by the shepherds; the presentation in the temple; the baptism of our Lord; a second genealogy; and the account of the temptation,—all introductory to a narrative embodying, in slightly different language, and with some variety of circumstance, the same

miracles and incidents which are given in Saints Matthew and Mark, concluding with a similar account of the sufferings, death, and resurrection of Jesus; and all this without one word of what would now be called "evangelical application" from one end to the other.

The Gospel of St. John commences with the most dogmatic enunciation possible of the great objective fact upon which all Christianity depends, viz. the Incarnation. It is by far the most doctrinal of the four, but all its doctrine has reference to two great outward facts in the history of God's dealing with men, first that God had sent His Son, and secondly that He would send His Spirit.

The doctrine of this Gospel throughout is Catholic, not Puritan. It is the setting forth of Christ as the Incarnate Son or Word,—as giving men His flesh as the bread of life,—as the resurrection of the body,—as giving to His Apostles a commission similar to that of His own.

It concludes with a fourth independent narrative of the events connected with the death of Christ and His appearances after His resurrection.

The next book which the Holy Spirit has caused to be written for our learning is also historical, giving an account of the setting-up of the Christian Church, and the teaching of the Apostles. This book contains the abstract of two sermons of the two leading Apostles, and a number of short detached notices, from which we gather the leading features of Apostolic teaching.

In the second chapter we have the first Christian sermon ever preached, and the most successful, and in it we have the Apostle building his call to repentance and baptism on the outward facts of the miracles, crucifixion, death, descent into hell, and resurrection of Jesus.

The only sermon of the Apostle St. Paul on record (in Acts xiii.) is an exact counterpart, in somewhat different

language, to this sermon of St. Peter; it is a call to repentance and faith, grounded on the death, burial (which is especially mentioned), resurrection, and appearances after His resurrection, of the Son of David.

The shorter notices of Apostolic preaching scattered throughout this book are all to the same effect.

When an Apostle is chosen into the place of the traitor, it is that "he may be a witness of the resurrection." (Acts i. 22.)

When we are told of the force and energy with which the Apostles preached, it is in the words, "with great power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus." (Acts iv. 33.) When the door of faith was opened to the Gentiles, and words were told Cornelius whereby he and his house were to be saved, the words as recorded are, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good . . . whom they slew and hanged on a tree. Him God raised up the third day, and showed Him openly, not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before of God, even to us who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead. To Him give all the prophets witness that whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts x. 38—43.)

Again, St. Paul's preaching is described in the words, "opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead, and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you is Christ." (Acts xvii. 3.)

Again, he himself describes his own preaching in similar terms, "Saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come, that Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light to the people and to the Gentiles." (Acts xxvi. 23.)

All the notices which we have of Apostolic preaching in this book bear witness to the same fact—that the Gospel of the primitive Church was the proclamation of God's love to a sinful world, as set forth in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. No single Apostolic discourse which has come down to us is conceived in the spirit of a modern revival sermon. Even if we have only the outlines of the Apostolic discourses, these outlines imply that the form of primitive doctrine resembled rather the articles of the creed than a Calvinistic or Methodistic system. They are outlines which could not possibly be filled up with what is now called a Gospel sermon.

We now come to the Epistles. The first of these in order in our Bibles, and the most important of all from the nature of its contents, is the Epistle to the Romans.

This Epistle begins with an enunciation of the Gospel exactly similar to those which we have found in the historical part of the New Testament: "The Gospel of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ, which was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."

But in this Epistle we have the Apostle practically applying "his Gospel" to the consolation and assurance of his converts, and here we have the Gospel as applied by God's Holy Spirit to the assurance and comfort of the individual; and we find that it is still represented as consisting in the record of the same outward facts, and not as so much inward experience or abstract declarations of the love of God or the all-sufficiency of the work of Christ. For instance, in applying the fact that Abraham was justified by faith to the present assurance of the Roman Christians, St. Paul writes, "It was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but for us also, to whom

it shall be imputed if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." (Rom. iv. 23—25.)

Let the reader mark these words. The Apostle here asserts that righteousness is imputed to a man, not when he believes that his sins are forgiven—not when he believes that he is personally justified and accepted—not when he realizes that Christ died for him in particular, —but when he believes that God the Father raised up God the Son from the dead. So at least asserts the Apostle. Whether circumstances require that the strict meaning of his words should be modified I do not stop to inquire.

Again, we find similar words in the tenth chapter of this Epistle: "The word of faith which we preach, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Rom. x. 9.)

Similarly St. Peter says, "You, who by Him do believe in God that raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God." (1 Pet. i. 21.)

Again, when St. John would fill his converts with fulness of joy he writes to them, not God's secret election, not individual assurance, but his own personal witness to the truth of the FACT of the Incarnation. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of Life . . . that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ, and these things write we unto you that your joy may be full." (1 John i. 1—4.)

In accordance with all this, St. Paul, in declaring to the Corinthians the Gospel which he preached, and in which his converts stood, sets forth to them first of all that which also he had received, how that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." (1 Cor. xv. 1—4.)

Such is the aspect under which the Gospel is presented to us in the Scriptures.

What provision does the Church make that this Gospel of the kingdom should be set before her children under the form in which it always appears in Scripture? What means does she employ that it should occupy the same prominent place in her system which it undoubtedly possesses in the Bible?

Very remarkable indeed is the provision which the Church makes for this, for it is by far the most prominent and noticeable thing in her service book. She provides for the setting forth of the Gospel under this its one Scripture aspect by the arrangement of her yearly round of fast and festival. She commemorates the great facts of Redemption on her great days of religious observance.

On these days she sets forth the great features of the Gospel rather as events or facts than as doctrines. She makes these days great days, and she does her best to invest them with a sanctity above that of other days, and this according to their relative importance.

Unquestionably, the Resurrection of Jesus as the seal of His Messiahship and God's own assurance of the full efficacy of His Son's death is the first event in the New Testament, and so Easter is the Queen of Days in the Church's year.

Next to it are Christmas, Good Friday, Ascension Day, and Whit Sunday, as setting forth the Incarnation and

Birth, the Atoning Death, the Exaltation of Jesus, and the Fulfilment of the Promise of the Father. Then come Advent, Epiphany, and certain Saints' Days.

And on various other Sundays, from Christmas to Trinity, we have certain great facts or leading events in the Saviour's life. On the festival of the Epiphany His adoration by the Magi as the firstfruits of the Gentile world; on the first Sunday after the Epiphany the one incident recorded in Scripture of the early youth of the Saviour; on the first Sunday in Lent His Temptation by the devil; and on the first Sunday after Easter the most remarkable of His appearances after His Resurrection.

A week of sacred service is given to the events immediately preceding His Crucifixion and to the circumstances of the Crucifixion itself, such as His entrance into Jerusalem, anointing for His burial, institution of the Eucharist, betrayal, agony, condemnation, scourging, crowning with thorns, death, and burial.

Now I do not merely say that it is scriptural to fasten these events on these days, and to associate as far as possible the day with the deed; I go much further, and say that no form of public prayer or liturgy, or any directory of public worship, or any mode of conducting public worship without form or liturgy, can be accounted scriptural unless it similarly recognises these days and seasons, for no other way is now possible of setting forth in the public services of the Church that historical aspect of the Gospel which we have seen to be the only one contained in Scripture. No other way, I say, is now possible, except the one which the Catholic Church has adopted from the very first, and which, by its universal adoption or recognition, has forestalled every other means of accomplishing this end.

It is not as if either Christendom, or any particular

church or sect in Christendom, could now meet together and strike out some new mode. The mode has been struck out and determined on long ago, so that the earliest Christian histories exhibit it as in operation; the very earliest fact in ecclesiastical history being a dispute respecting the time of observing Easter.

Of course, other plans of setting forth in public worship the historical form in which God has embodied the Gospel are conceivable, but owing to the state of the sects they are not practicable, or even possible.

The sects who at the time of the Reformation flung to the winds the observance of Easter and Christmas, equally flung to the winds the great outward facts of redemption as the evidences of God's goodwill to the sinner, and substituted for them the evidence of inward personal experiences. I do not, of course, for a moment mean to say that they denied the facts, *but they substituted other considerations for the evangelical application of these facts.* They would seek to inspire Christian joy, for instance, not as St. John did, by the direct application of such a fact as the Incarnation, but by such doctrines as effectual calling, sensible conversion, imputed righteousness, and final perseverance.

For ever blessed be God's Holy Name, when He brought about the Reformation of the Church of England, He so ordered it that this recognition of the historical form of the Gospel which pervaded the unreformed service books was not cast aside, but preserved in its fulness, and we enjoy it now in our yearly round of sacred fast and festival.

By the teaching of Collect, Epistle, Gospel, proper preface in Holy Communion, and proper Lessons on various days of the Church's year, we soberly and reverently connect the very passage of time with the facts of redemption. The year in its silent course preaches the very Gospel of Scripture. Unless we had this yearly teaching of Gospel facts,

our service book would not be scriptural, if by scriptural we mean in accordance with the teaching of Scripture, for Scripture brings before us the Gospel of Christ as the record of certain facts respecting Him.

Scripture reveals to us the mind of God towards us, not in abstract doctrine, or treatise, or essay, but in the record of facts, and these facts the Incarnation, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of the Saviour. So that it is as strictly according to Scripture to keep Christmas, Epiphany, and Good Friday, though there is not one word in Scripture respecting the keeping of these days, as it is scriptural to teach in a Sunday School, though there is not one word in Scripture about such an institution as a Sunday School. The keeping of these days with special Lessons and Gospels and Psalms is our mode of assigning to certain facts, manifesting God's love to the world, that exceeding prominence which we find assigned to them in God's word, just as they who teach in a Sunday School do it as the most feasible mode of fulfilling the plain Scripture duty of instructing in religion the children of those who from want of inclination or ability do not instruct them themselves. So that when other bodies of Christians turn round upon the Church, and ask her her reason for keeping certain days of observance which are not mentioned in Scripture, she must, if she is faithful, say to them, "It is true I have special prayers and special instruction for these days. It is my mode, a mode handed down to me from the times of the Apostles, of falling in with the mind of the Spirit as to the form in which the Gospel is to be presented to man.

"The Spirit who inspired the Scriptures has in these Scriptures wrapped up salvation in certain facts, and made the Gospel of salvation to be the preaching of these facts. Do you who question me make any attempt to guarantee

to those who put themselves under your guidance that they should have the Gospel presented to them in that particular form in which it appears in Holy Writ? Have you any plan whatsoever for effecting this? I, by celebrating the great facts of redemption on certain days, do my best to ensure that the order which I find in Scripture is adhered to. I have a plan to ensure as far as possible adherence to the teaching of the Spirit on this momentous matter. What plan have you?"

I shall now make one or two observations on the foregoing matter.

In the first place, it is quite evident that no setting forth of certain abstract doctrines, no matter how true or needful, can, if we submit to be guided by Scripture, be substituted for the facts themselves. Take the Passion of Christ, that is, His betrayal, agony, desertion, denial by Peter, crucifixion, and death. The doctrine dependent upon these facts is that of the Atonement. "He was wounded for our transgression, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed."

Now it may be said that the outward circumstances of the Passion of Christ, precious though they are, are only the shell or husk of a hidden reality, which reality is the Atonement; so we must pass over them, and fix our attention on the Atonement alone.

But to do so, however plausible, would be to the last degree unscriptural, if scriptural means that which is contained in Scripture; for Holy Scripture, instead of passing over the outward circumstances of Christ's sufferings, in order to set forth more at large the Atonement resulting from them, dwells with great particularity on these sufferings, and occupies comparatively little of its space with doctrinal disquisition on the Atonement.

The Spirit has caused the inspired writers to dwell much on the sufferings of the Saviour. He has also given to us the blessed result of these sufferings in the reconciliation of man to God. But the comparative space in the sacred volume occupied by these two things is the reverse of what man would have expected. Instead of little being said about the atoning sufferings, and much about the doctrine of atonement, little (comparatively speaking) is said about atonement, and much about the sufferings which purchased it.

Let it be quite understood that I am not for a moment asserting that there is any indistinctness in Scripture respecting atonement, or that it is not the very first of Scripture truths.

Scripture appears to me to teach very distinctly the doctrine of vicarious atonement. I am not speaking of the comparative clearness with which it is revealed, but of the space which the enunciation of it occupies in comparison with the record of the facts on which it is based.

Now if it be the one great intention of God in the inspiration of Holy Scripture to lead us to trust in His dear Son, and if He who made our souls knows best how to lead them to exercise the truest trust in Christ, then, as far as we can gather from the contents of Holy Scripture, that purpose of God is best accomplished, not by our ignoring the sufferings in order to dwell upon the abstract doctrine of atonement, but by assigning to the actual sufferings of the God-man the exceeding prominence which God has assigned to them in His word.

For anything that we know, the exclusive contemplation of the *doctrines* apart from the *facts* of redemption may nourish a Christian character very different from that which God desires to see in His children. The Christian

character which has been formed by the exclusive contemplation of the doctrines usually (and rightly) called Evangelical, is certainly not humble, not forbearing, not forgiving, not peaceable, not childlike, not unobtrusive.

There is very deep instruction to be gathered from the fact that the most decided doctrinal statements respecting the vicarious nature of Christ's death are thrown in by an inspired Apostle almost incidentally in a passage in which the writer is exhorting slaves to be subject to their masters with all fear, and to take it patiently if they suffer wrongfully, because in this they were called to follow Him Who, whilst He was "bearing our sins in His own body on the tree," left us an example of not reviling again when we are reviled. (1 Pet. ii. 18—25.)

If in the preceding pages I have given a fair representation of what is in the Bible and in the Prayer-book, then the Prayer-book is incomparably more scriptural than such documents as the "Westminster Confession," or Calvin's "Institutes;" and this quite apart from the truth or falsehood of any particular doctrinal statements contained in these books, for in these books Christianity is cast into a different form altogether to what we find it in the Bible.

In Scripture, what is now called "doctrine," almost invariably comes in incidentally.[1] It is almost inextricably mixed up with narrative, history, and practical teaching. It is almost always suggested by circumstances which must be understood and taken into full account if we would ascertain the exact view which the writer himself or his original readers took of the doctrine.

Thus, to take an example, the abstract doctrine of

[1] The only exceptions which I can call to mind are the dogmatic statements of the Incarnation and Deity of our Lord in John i.; 1 John i.; Hebrews i.

election is never discussed in Scripture. It always appears either in connexion with the choosing of the Apostles, or with the casting away of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles.

Of course certain Scripture texts can be adduced for each doctrinal statement in such books as I have alluded to; but these texts multiplied tenfold would not make such books scriptural, for they would still fail to present Christianity to us under the form in which God has presented it. Scripture is not a collection of texts arranged in order after the manner of Bishop Gastrell's "Institutes," or Chalmers's "Scripture References." Its order is of an immeasurably higher character, and betokens some far deeper design on God's part than to furnish us with a magazine of texts wherewith to support some systematic view of His truth.

I now proceed to consider how the Scripture view of the Gospel as the record of certain outward facts is set before us in the daily services of the Church. If the Gospel consists (as St. Paul describes it as doing) in the record that God's Son, Jesus Christ, was "made of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Rom. i. 1, 2); that He "died for our sins and was buried and rose again the third day" (1 Cor. xv. 3, 4); then the Church has made ample provision that this Scripture aspect of it should be set forth fully and practically in the daily service of prayer and praise.

For, first of all, we confess twice in daily prayer that Apostles' Creed in which we recount the great facts which alone are designated in Scripture as the Gospel.

Secondly, we turn this Creed into a psalm of praise (the Te Deum) and in it glorify God for the knowledge of the same great facts of Redemption.

Thirdly, we have on three days of the week, a solemn

Litany in which we recount again these same facts of the Scripture Gospel, and entreat the Saviour to deliver us, because He Himself underwent for our sakes the humiliation or sufferings which they set forth. So that three times in each of her more frequented week-day services does the Church require her children to recount the facts of Redemption.

In the Apostles' Creed, we profess our belief in Him Who redeemed us, "Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary," in Him, Whose humiliation on our behalf the Holy Spirit sets forth in the very first page of the New Testament. The words of the Creed are very plain, very bare they may be called; but equally plainly and even barely is the fact stated in the Scriptures. "Mary was found with child of the Holy Ghost." "That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." "She brought forth her first-born son, and he called His name Jesus." (Matt. i. 18, 20, 25.)

This fact, so simply and barely stated, this conception and birth of God's Son, is the foundation of all that follows. It is the first step in God's work of redeeming men, and raising them up to Himself. There is wrapped up in this bare fact, thus simply stated, power, and love, and condescension, and wisdom unspeakable. All the deeds, and sufferings, and victories of Jesus, by which our souls and bodies are redeemed, all of them derive all their redeeming power from this, that He who wrought, or suffered, or conquered, was "God's only Son, conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." The Holy Spirit, I say, on the first page of the New Testament, sets forth this fact in the fewest words and most concise way possible, and the Church echoes these words of the Spirit in the Creed, and in that simplest Creed adds nothing to them,

but having pronounced them, proceeds to confess the suffering, crucifixion and death of Jesus in equally plain terms; for in the four Gospels she finds these things stated without comment of any sort. In the first Gospel "And they crucified him;" in the second, "When they had crucified Him;" in the third, "There they crucified Him;" in the fourth, "Golgotha, where they crucified Him." And so with His atoning and reconciling death. The first Gospel records, "Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost;" the second, "And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost;" the third, "He gave up the ghost;" the fourth, "He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost."

And so with His burial, His resurrection, His ascension, all are stated in the Gospels as facts, and so we follow the strict line which the Spirit has marked out, and once daily confess that we believe these facts of redemption, feeling that, though at times we must expand them, and comment on them, and apply them; yet at times we must state them as the Spirit has thus stated them, and leave them in the bare and naked simplicity in which the Spirit has left them, when He first caused them to be set down as objects of faith.

But in the second place the Church has turned this Creed, *i.e.* these statements of Gospel facts—into a psalm of praise, which she uses in daily service: so that not only do we confess the Gospel, but we praise God for it daily in words marvellous for their holy fervour and chastened sublimity.

"Thou art the King of Glory: O Christ.

Thou art the everlasting Son: of the Father.

When thou tookest upon thee to deliver man: thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb.

When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death: thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers."

In the third place, the Church in her chief service of supplication and intercession has made provision for recounting a third time these facts of redemption.

In the Litany we are directed to beseech the Saviour to deliver us "By the mystery of His Holy Incarnation; by His Holy Nativity and Circumcision; by His Baptism, Fasting, and Temptation; by His Agony and Bloody Sweat; by His Cross and Passion; by His precious Death and Burial; by His glorious Resurrection and Ascension; and by the coming of the Holy Ghost."

If we are to judge of the mind of God by what is written, no appeal can be so acceptable as this, for we here appeal to the Saviour to do for us in accordance with what He *has* already done and suffered for us, and the Scripture tells us of nothing which He has done for us like these great things.

The Prayer-book, then, is scriptural on the subject, of all others, of the greatest moment, which is, the exhibition of the Gospel under the form in which it is presented to us in Scripture.

The Gospel appears in Scripture as the record or proclamation of the Incarnation, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus; and the Church, in her yearly round of Fast and Festival, and in her daily offering of Prayer and Praise, fastens the attention of her children on that *out*ward, objective, historical view of the Gospel, which the Scripture puts immeasurably before every other.

Consequently no Church, or body of men calling themselves a Church, which has no order or plan for accomplishing this end, but leaves to the imaginings of each individual minister the form under which he shall present the Gospel, can be scriptural; more especially, if such Church or body has an authorized confession of faith, or standard of doctrine, in which such historical form of the Gospel is

studiously replaced by some more doctrinal form, no matter how true that form be.

Before leaving this part of the subject, I desire to correct one or two misapprehensions which may arise from the foregoing remarks.

I have shown, I think, conclusively, that the Gospel appears in Scripture as the record of facts, rather than as doctrines, theories, or experiences. But, let it not be for one moment supposed that I have done this in order to depreciate doctrinal teaching. I maintain, and will uphold so long as God gives me grace to do so, the natural sense of the Thirty-nine Articles. I look upon every statement contained in them as grounded on many express Scriptures. I regard them as the most perfect form ever presented to man of the doctrine of the New Testament, separated from the historical and practical matter, with which it is mixed in Scripture; but then we have no right to separate the doctrinal from the historical and practical matter with which God has connected it. What God has joined together it is not for us to put asunder.

If the Church had the Articles alone, as her standard of reference, she would not be scriptural, no matter how clearly each statement in them might be proved from Scripture.

It may be said that they are the spirit or essence of Scripture. Yes; but what authority has God given us to put Scripture into our intellectual alembic and distil its spirit or essence out of it? At least, what right have we to do so, and represent the product as scriptural?

I would uphold, then, the Articles in their plain, literal sense; but, I would uphold them as part and parcel of the Prayer-book. Taken in connexion with the Prayer-book, they admirably serve the purpose of exhibiting the

doctrinal aspect of God's truth, separated for a certain needful purpose, but still not in connexion with what God has joined with it.

In the next place, it has been suggested to me that some statements in the foregoing pages might be misconstrued as implying that I believed that a mere historical faith is what God requires. On the contrary, I believe that the only faith effectual to salvation is a realizing faith.

I have said nothing whatsoever respecting the nature and efficacy of that faith in the soul which goes forth to meet and embrace the external facts or realities which God has placed before it for its acceptance. My object has been to determine what are the outward realities which God offers to the acceptance of our internal faith, not the nature of the faith which accepts them, and to this point I have carefully adhered.

Still it may be asked, Why have any other book besides the Bible? What need of any book in public worship to represent the Scriptures if you have the Scripture itself?

To which we answer that no body or sect of Christians in existence uses the Scriptures alone in public worship. The service of the Catholic Church is the only approach to such a thing. Above two-thirds of the Daily Service of the Church consists of extracts from Scripture.

The public services of the various Protestant sects consist of prayers supposed, in most cases, to be extempore, and, on that account, assumed to be the composition of the minister; the reading of portions of Scripture, the selection of which is also entirely in the hands of the person conducting the service; the singing of metrical hymns from some book peculiar to the sect or congregation, and sermons. Having carefully ascertained not only the mode of conducting Divine worship among the various sects of Dissenters,

but also the nature and quality of the worship so conducted, I speak with confidence when I say that in no case is there anything approaching to a rule or method for bringing before the people of these sects the facts of redemption as they are presented to us in the Scripture narrative.[1] The only fixed form or Liturgy of any of these sects is their hymn-book, in which the hymns are always arranged according to the leading features of the Calvinistic scheme, or according to the heads of individual Christian experience.

[1] Of course this does not apply to certain congregations, especially among the Wesleyans and others, in which the Prayer-book is partially used.

CHAPTER II.

CREED OF ST. ATHANASIUS.

THE objections taken, even by many sincere believers in the ever-blessed Trinity, to the Creed of St. Athanasius, are twofold. First, it is supposed to make greater demands upon our faith than the other creeds.

Secondly, its damnatory clauses are assumed to be unwarrantably severe and uncharitable.

1st. This Creed is supposed to make greater demands upon our submissive faith than the other two creeds, especially than the Apostles'. It is undoubtedly longer, and contains more dogmatic assertions, and so unthinking persons suppose that there must be, on this account, less certainty that all the assertions contained in it can be proved from Scripture.

We have three creeds. The Apostles', which is the shortest, and expressed apparently in the most familiar terms. The Nicene Creed, which is, on one head, somewhat more diffuse; and the Creed we are now considering, which is certainly much longer, and contains terms such as "incomprehensible," "Incarnation," "confusion of substance," "unity of person," which require some little knowledge of the elements of Theology before they can be realized.

But which of these three creeds is in reality the most difficult?

I am supposing that we think of what we say in solemn worship; that we endeavour to gain as clear a notion as we can of the meaning of the words we use, and of what we commit ourselves to by using them.

Now, if we weigh well the meaning of the words composing each clause of these three creeds; which, of course, all reasonable Christians ought to do, then we shall find that the Apostles' Creed, simple as it seems, contains one statement which, as it is there expressed, is incomparably harder than anything in the Creed of St. Athanasius; and that statement is, that "Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary."

For this statement, simple as it seems to those who repeat words without realizing them, is a declaration, in very abrupt terms, of the greatest and deepest mystery of the faith; and it is a bare statement, accompanied by no explanation which may show us that this mystery, whilst it is above our reason, is yet in accordance with it.

It must, of course, be understood that in saying this, I am not saying one word in disparagement of such a formulary as the creed of our Baptism, God forbid. I am merely directing attention to a fact, and what I have said applies equally to the statement of the Incarnation, which we have in the first page of the New Testament.

There the Incarnation is revealed in terms equally abrupt and plain. "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost." "A virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel."

Now the bare terms of the first chapter of St. Matthew require expanding, and their meaning put into other words, for if the Incarnation was set forth in no other

terms but these, we should be utterly in the dark about it—we could form no conception respecting the nature of the mystery, and God's intention in bringing it about. But God has given to us, in the first chapter of St. John, some insight into the mystery. There we find other words in which God has set forth this great truth, which enable us to form some conception of it. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

Now, to an unthinking person, these words in St. John would sound harder than the apparently more simple terms in St. Matthew, "That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost;" whilst to a thinking person the terms used by St. John would be the easier, because they give a more logical and intellectual view of the mystery, and answer a number of questions which must suggest themselves to the thinking mind in reading the first chapter of St Matthew, to which the terms used by that Evangelist suggest no answer.

So it is with the two creeds we are comparing. The unthinking person sees less difficulty in the Apostles' Creed, simply because he gives himself no trouble about understanding the words which he uses, whereas the thoughtful person sees the value of the longer and more dogmatic creed, because it gives him a logical view of the truth. It answers a thousand questions which the few simple words of the shorter creed suggest, but do not solve.

Take the words of the Apostles' Creed, "I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." See what

can be asked upon these words, to which they, taken by themselves, afford no answer.

First—Who is this Jesus, that we should profess to believe in Him in the same terms in which we profess that we believe in God? We go on to profess that this Jesus is God's only Son. Why God's *only* Son? Are we not all "sons of God" in one sense? Are not good men sons of God in a higher sense because "born of God?" How then is this Jesus God's *only Son?* And how came this "Only Son" of the Maker of all things to bear the name of a man? Then how is it that a man is called "Our Lord?" Surely in the highest worship the name of "Lord" should be restricted to the One God. Then, how came it to pass that the Son of God could be "conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary?" Who is the Holy Ghost, that through Him the Son of God should be conceived? Then, how could the Son of God be born of a woman; of a virgin? Again, how could the Son of God suffer and die? If a son partakes of his father's nature, then the Only Son of God partakes of *His* Father's nature, and so must be infinitely above the reach of suffering and death, for it is contrary to the first principles of Theology to suppose that the Divine Nature can suffer, and it is blasphemy to assert that the Divine Nature can die.

All these questions are suggested by the Articles of the Apostles' Creed we have alluded to, and the Creed itself suggests no answer to them, whereas the Creed of St. Athanasius answers them all.

The greater part of the Creed of St. Athanasius may be supposed to be written for the purpose of answering these questions which may be raised upon this part of the Apostles' Creed.

For, first, it lays down that the Divine Nature is One,

yet is wholly shared by Three Persons, the Father,
ion, and the Holy Ghost—that these Persons so par-
of the Divine Nature that Each One by Himself is
and Lord, and yet that this is not to be understood
we believed in three Gods, or three Lords.

order to this, the Creed in question takes all the
s or attributes applied to the Divine Being in Scrip-
—that He is Uncreated, Eternal, Incomprehensible,
ghty, Lord, God; it declares that Each One of the
e Persons is all these, and yet that there is but One
ghty Uncreated Lord God.

l this is a necessary deduction from our present Scrip-
. If we take into FULL account all that is said in the
respecting the Unity of God, and all that is said of
Divine Nature and glory of Christ and the Holy
t, we are driven to accept a doctrine identical with
stated in this Creed, that "there is one person of the
er, another of the Son, and another of the Holy
t; but the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and
e Holy Ghost is all One; the Glory equal, the Majesty
ernal."

ıe latter part of this Creed is written to give us such
w of the person of the Saviour as that we should
that He is in all respects God and in all respects
; His nature is not a mixture of the Divine and
ın; He is not *partly* God, and *partly* man, but He is
y God, and *wholly* man. Wholly partaking of His
er's adorable and infinite nature, and wholly partaking
ır lowly and finite nature. The glory of the God-
in Him does not extinguish one thing essential to
perfect manhood, neither does the manhood obscure
lory of his Godhead.

l this is essential to our salvation, for if He were not
all His love and sufferings could have had no power

to save us, and if He were not man, He could neither truly suffer for us, nor truly sympathize with us.

In no other way than in that set forth in this Creed can we truly and intellectually hold that He is in very deed God, and in very deed our Brother.

So that the opposition to this Creed, from its supposed difficulties, arises from want of thought, for the Creed of St. Athanasius gives to the thinking mind a rational and intellectual view of the astounding mystery which is stated in all its naked difficulty in the Apostles' Creed.

The Creed of St. Athanasius answers the question respecting God's having an Only Son, for it teaches us that the nature of God is fully partaken of by Two Persons, who bear to one another the relation of Father to Son.

The Creed of St. Athanasius solves such questions as how it came to pass that the Son of God was conceived and born, and had a man's name, and suffered and died a man's death: for we confess in it that Jesus our Lord is "God of the substance of His Father begotten before the worlds, and man of the substance of His Mother born in the world," and that this God and man is "One Christ, Who suffered for our salvation."

That the Creed of St. Athanasius is more easy to a thinking mind than the Apostles' Creed, so far at least as its statement respecting the Incarnation is concerned, is only in accordance with what surely *may* be the fact, that a bare simple statement expressed in very plain words may be very difficult, and a more elaborate statement, expressed in somewhat more scientific terms, may be in reality far more easy to apprehend.

This applies not only to the clauses in the Creed of St. Athanasius compared with the corresponding clauses in the Apostles' Creed, but to the statements of the Incarnation

in the same Creed (St. Athanasius') compared with certain Scripture statements.

Take these three very plain verses. "The Word was made flesh." (John i. 12.) "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father." (John xiv. 9.) "Our hands have handled of the Word of life." (1 John i. 1.) Here are three very plain statements, expressed almost in monosyllables, and yet any student in Theology knows that each one of these verses, taken as it stands, involves a far greater difficulty than any thing asserted in the Creed of St. Athanasius.

We have now to consider certain expressions in this Creed which are assumed to be unscripturally harsh and uncharitable. I believe that, on examination, the objections to these expressions will be found just as futile as the objections to the rest of it.

What are called the "damnatory clauses" in this Creed are only the echo of certain damnatory clauses in the Word of God, and are to be received in the same sense, applied in the same way, and with the same limitations, as certain corresponding denunciations in the New Testament.

I will take the best known of these denunciations, which forms a part of the last commission of Christ to His Apostles, "He that believeth not shall be damned;" the whole commission being, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." (St. Mark xvi. 16.)

Now, suppose that with this commission I go to some heathen city, and preach the Gospel, what message must I deliver? Evidently the message contained in my commission, and this message is twofold. "He that believeth shall be saved." "He that believeth not shall

be damned." If I am to be a faithful messenger, I must deliver all my message. If I think the terms are too harsh, as an honest man I have only one alternative, I must throw up my commission. If I am true to my Master's instructions I have to tell my heathen hearers plainly that if they do not believe they will be damned.

Now supposing that, after I have faithfully delivered my message, a heathen who has heard it dies in unbelief. Am I to say respecting that man that he is certainly lost? No: clearly not—I have nothing more to do with him. He has passed to the bar of his Sovereign Judge. Now, I humbly trust that this Sovereign Judge has reserved to Himself the right of making allowances. I cannot but believe that He has reserved to Himself the right of modifying His decisions in particular cases according to the circumstances of each soul, which circumstances are known only to Him; but though He has reserved to Himself this power, He has assuredly not given it to me. I have but one duty, to deliver His message unaltered and unmodified. Whilst my hearers are in life, then, I must say to them, "He that believeth not shall be damned." When they pass to the bar of their Judge, I humbly hope that God will take every circumstance into consideration which can possibly tell in their favour. But I have no power to make any reservations, the terms of my commission being, "He that believeth not shall be damned."

For a legislature to make a law, and fence that law with a penalty, and at the same time to express all the possible modifications and exceptions, would make any law a dead letter. And as it is with the law of man, so it must be with the law of God. The New Testament contains a multitude of denunciations of the wrath of God against all manner of sins, which denunciations

would be entirely deprived of their force if they were accompanied with reservations, say in favour of those who sin ignorantly, or in particular degrees of ignorance, or who are educated in sin, as many are.

And if, for obvious reasons, these reservations are not expressed in the Bible, neither must the Church express them when she denounces the punishment of God against impenitent sinners.

Now, all this is strictly applicable to the damnatory clauses of this Creed, and in somewhat of this way.

The word of God lays down in the plainest possible terms that belief in Jesus Christ is necessary to salvation. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." This is so plain, and is so universally acknowledged, that I need say nothing more upon it.

But another matter concerning this belief in Christ is quite as certain, though it is not now recognised in the popular religion of the day—which is, that *the only belief in Jesus Christ which is recognised in Scripture is a belief in Christ's* PERSON, *that He is God's only-begotten Son come in the flesh.*

Belief, I say, in His PERSON, rather than—though of course not excluding—belief in His *work* or in His *love.*

Let us see whether this be not so.

First, we have our Saviour saying, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish," &c. (John iii. 16.) Now, that this belief is belief in the *person* of Christ is evident from the next verse but one, "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed *in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*"

Here is a damnatory clause, for here is expressly laid down the condemnation of those who do not believe,

—but in what?" Why, do not believe in the NAME of the Only Begotten Son—not merely in the work of the Son of God, though that work be a "finished work"—not even in the love of the Son of God, though that love "passeth knowledge," but in the *name* of the only begotten, *i.e.* in that which distinguishes His Person as the Person of the Only Begotten.

Again, "If ye believe not that I am [He], ye shall die in your sins." (John viii. 24.) Of course we must ask here, "Whom are we to believe that He is?" And this is what the Jews asked, for we go on to read, "Then said they unto Him, Who art Thou? And Jesus said unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning." Now up to this time Jesus had represented Himself to be the True, *i. e.* the Only Begotten Son of God, and because of this they had taken up stones to stone Him. He had as yet said little or nothing to them about His *work*, but He had said much about His *Person;* and naturally so, for how could they exercise any true trust in His work, except they realized His Person, for the all-sufficiency of His work depends wholly upon the greatness of His Person, that He is in very truth the Only Begotten Son—the "Word made flesh?"

Again, we have a confirmation of this in the very next chapter (John ix. 35). "Jesus heard that they had cast him out: and when He had found him, He said unto him, Dost thou believe on *the Son of God?* He answered and said, *Who* is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him."

And again, in the thirteenth chapter: "Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am He." (John xiii. 19.)

Again, we have the Saviour Himself saying, "Ye believe in God, believe also in ME" (John xiv. 1), mentioning Himself, that is, His Person.

How could He put "believing in Himself" side by side with "believing in God," except that belief be the recognition of what He is, viz. the Son of God, and so in nature equal with God?

Again, when St. Paul began to preach, it is said that "he preached Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God." (Acts ix. 20.)

Again, in the very first verses of the Epistle to the Romans, the Gospel is set forth as having specially to do with Christ's *Person*. "The Gospel of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power ... by the resurrection from the dead." Here we have belief in the resurrection itself set forth as subsidiary to the belief in the Person of Christ as the Son of God, for St. Paul says, "He was declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead."

Lastly, I will take 1 John iv. 3: "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof," &c. Here we have belief in Christ's Person guarded with a very strong anathema.

Now, what can the Apostle here mean by "confessing not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh?" Evidently he can mean but one thing, "confessing not" the Incarnation, for the Incarnation is the one thing which distinguishes the coming of Christ into the world from the coming of any other man into the world. He must mean, in fact, the thing which he expresses in other words in his Gospel,—"The Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us."

All men come into the world *in the flesh*, so that there would be no meaning in the Apostle's denunciation of those who denied that Jesus Christ had "come in the flesh," unless Christ's coming in the flesh involved what St. John elsewhere connects with it, viz. the Incarnation.

From all this it is abundantly clear that the only belief in Christ which the Scriptures recognise is a belief in His Person as God's Only Begotten Son Incarnate.

Now the whole creed of St. Athanasius, as I have shown, may be assumed to be written to defend, or hedge round, or guard, the simple statement that Jesus Christ is God's Only Begotten Son in our nature; so that we should hold and confess it in the one real true sense which the salvation of such a world as ours requires.

If any one holds in its integrity, without any reservation, the statement that Jesus Christ is God's true and Only Son in our nature, he commits himself to the belief of every statement respecting the Trinity and Incarnation in the Creed of St. Athanasius. He may not be conscious of so doing, but he unquestionably does so. For if the Son of God be His Only Begotten Son, and not His Son by adoption or by regeneration, then He must be Eternal, Incomprehensible, Uncreated, Almighty, Lord, and God, for it is the very nature of the Godhead to be all this, and so if He is the true actual *Begotten* Son of God He must be all this—otherwise the glory of the First Person as "the Father" would be taken away, for He would have begotten a Son to whom He would have communicated an inferior and created, and so less glorious, nature than his own.

On any hypothesis short of the Athanasian, the relation of the Son to the Father in the Godhead would be nothing like so intimate and close as the relation of any human son to his father.

By the Creed of St. Athanasius we hold and confess that "Son" means "Son," that "begetting" means the real communication of nature—of what constitutes Deity—that these terms when applied to the Godhead have no unreal meaning, and are not inferior to the same terms which we apply to our relationship of parent and offspring. They may have a higher meaning, but we will not for a moment allow them to have a lower.

If we give them a lower we lose our whole conception of the "love of the Father" to sinners.

The more real the Sonship of the Son to the Father, the greater the love of the Father in giving Him.

The Creed of St. Athanasius is the great defence of the reality of the love of God the Father. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," and the Creed of St. Athanasius obliges us to realize and confess that this Son whom He gave is really and actually His Only Begotten. So that in giving Him, God manifested a love to us sinners infinitely greater than if He had given the highest archangel from before His throne.

So that when we confess the damnatory clauses of this Creed we say again, perhaps in stern and somewhat harsh, but still in true language, what the Scriptures say, that to be saved we must believe in the person of the Redeemer as the true and only Son of the living God, and so a partaker of all His Father's glorious and Divine perfections, and at the same time as true Son of man, and so partaker of all that constitutes unfallen human nature.

When we repeat these clauses, we say what our Lord says, "He that believeth not shall be damned," and by the rest of the Creed we make this belief to be—what the Scripture evidently implies it to be—a belief in the *Person* of the Redeemer as the Son of God Incarnate. If we are to be faithful to God on the one hand, and to souls on the

other, we must set forth this belief in the Name of the Only Begotten as it is set forth in Scripture.

God says that to be saved we must believe in His Son, and we must say so too; and if we would be free from men's blood we must assert that this belief must be, in the first place, a real *bonâ fide* acceptance of what the Scriptures say respecting Jesus, that He is the Only Begotten Son of God, and that He has "come in the flesh."

We do this, and then leave the matter to God, to deal with the man who comes short as seems good to Him.

So then in the use of these denunciations we are not pronouncing on the eternal state of any one. We are simply saying what Scripture says or implies, that saving faith in Christ must fully recognize Who He is. And we should be unfaithful to our trust if we said less.

Though we humbly trust that God will make every allowance, and take into full account the education or circumstances which have led to the heresy of particular persons, we have no power to make exceptions or reservations.

If the Scriptures are to be relied upon, God denounces eternal wrath, not only against sins of the flesh, but against sins of the spirit; such as unbelief—more particularly unbelief in the glory of His Son's Person; and it must be so, for the unbelief which refuses assent to the glory of Christ's Person as the Only Begotten Son of God, strikes at the root of that manifestation of the love of the Father to us which is implied in His having given His Only Son, for it makes Him to have given a creature whom He has created, and not a Son Who shares His own nature.

It strikes also, as is evident, at the root of the Scripture manifestation of the loving condescension of the Son, for the condescension of the Son is this, that being the true Son of God He became the true Son of man, and abhorred

neither the womb, nor pain, nor disgrace, nor death, to save us.

In conclusion, this Creed is not only a protest against past or present forms of unbelief, or misbelief, it is a standing protest against the prevalent fanaticism of the day, which calls frantically on the sinner to trust in Christ's "blood," or "finished work," without any reference to, or with very little reference to, His Person.

It is a fact that books are now written and circulated by hundreds of thousands, urging men to believe in Christ without telling them what they are to believe about Him.*

I say again, we have books written to excite men to come to Christ just as they are, to cast themselves upon Him, to wash themselves in His blood, and so on, and the writers of these books marvellously ignore the one thing which makes His blood saving. I may be told that these men are quite orthodox on the divinity of our Lord. No doubt they are, just as many a "legal" teacher is quite orthodox on justification. But if we are to be guided by Scripture, it is not enough to be orthodox on this point. It must be brought out into the first place, for it is the first thing in the New Testament.

And the bringing forward prominently the Person of Christ as God's Only Begotten Son Incarnate, makes the

* I allude to such books as Reid's "Blood of Jesus." I doubt not God often conveys good through such books, just as He undoubtedly conveyed benefit to thousands of souls by the preaching of such men as St. Francis of Assisi; but Scriptural they are not. I once had an interesting conversation with a great revival preacher of our Church. I asked him what place the application of the doctrine of the Incarnation had in the matter of the present saving of a soul. He seemed to think none. He was surprised at the question, and yet the Incarnation is the first thing in each of the four Gospels.

most marked difference in all Christian teaching. It alters its whole tone. It engenders, or, at least, is calculated to engender, sober, reverent, humble confidence, rather than noisy, boasting, obtrusive profession.

It damps fanaticism, because it is clearly out of character with that irreverent familiarity which is the life and soul of fanatical teaching.

If we realize that He Who died to save us is God Incarnate, we never can be tormented with doubts about His ability and willingness to save, or whether we have an interest in Him. We are raised into an atmosphere above all this.

Able to save you, why, He is your God!

Willing to save you, why, He took your flesh for this one purpose!

Have you an interest in His blood?

If He shed His blood for a select few, you probably have not. If He is the Eternal Word made flesh to redeem mankind and be our Second Adam, then there seems to be no room for doubt about the matter.

CHAPTER III.

BAPTISMAL SERVICES.

THE next subject which demands our attention is a great principle pervading the whole of Scripture, and which more particularly finds its enunciation in the Baptismal Services. It is also clearly expressed in the Catechism, and in the Confirmation Service, and will be found, on examination, to be recognised in every part of the Prayer Book, just as it is recognised in every part of the Bible.

It may be called the great Church truth of God's word; and may be stated somewhat as follows:—

From the time of Abraham to the present time it has been God's will to save men, not only by working in them individual personal religion, but by joining them together in a body, or family, or kingdom, or Church.

This body has always been an outward and visible body, known by certain outward and visible marks. Men have always been admitted into this Church by a rite or ordinance which betokened God's special goodwill towards each one of them. This Church, or body, has always been governed and instructed by a visible ministry. This Church, or body, or family, always has been, and, till the Second Advent, always will be a mixed body; *i.e.* it has always consisted of two sets of persons, good and bad, penitent and impenitent, those who realize God's love, and those who do not.

The Covenant of God has always been with this visible Church.

The word of God has always been addressed to this outward visible body.

The members of this body, or Church, are always assumed to be, or to have once been, in the favour of God.

Each member is assumed to partake of the covenant grace, whatever that grace be.

When he commits sin, he is always assumed to sin against grace, of which he has been made a partaker.

Never, for one moment, is it supposed that he sins because God has withheld grace from him.

No interior or "invisible" Church within this outward body is ever recognised in God's word, as a separate Church. When a man who belongs to the visible body lives contrary to his profession, he is nowhere bid to see whether he only belongs to the visible body, and not to the invisible. He is never bid to get into some inner true fold. Another way of speaking is adopted in his case. He is rather bid to believe and realize that the Church in which he is already is the fold of God, and so his condemnation will be the greater if he do not live and love accordingly. He is not bid to examine himself as to whether he be a member of the true Church, but as to whether he be a true member of the Church.

Such is, in brief, what we may call the great Church principle of Scripture, and its practical application.

The following remarks may serve further to illustrate it:—

God, I said, saves men, not merely by making them one by one, individually and personally, religious; but by joining them together in a Church or community.

When God says, in the book of Proverbs, "Keep thy heart with all diligence," He seems to ask for nothing but

individual, personal, internal religion. Such a thing might be said to one living apart by himself—cut off from all outward means of grace. But when God says of the Jews, in the opening of the prophecy of Isaiah, "Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider," it is clear that He recognizes something over and above personal religion, or personal responsibility. He looks upon the whole people as one man, and calls them by the name of this one man; and though the sin for which He upbraids them was made up of, and could all be resolved into, the sins of individuals, God in this place chooses rather to recognize it as the sin of a whole family or Church.

Now let the reader remember that in every place in which God speaks of the Jews as "His people," "His flock," "Jacob," "Israel," &c. He recognizes this Church principle.

In no one case does God, by such terms as "My people," "Mine inheritance," "Jacob," or "Israel," mean certain godly individuals, considered as an invisible or inner Church. He always means, by these terms, the whole visible body or Church. It is scarcely possible to exaggerate the prominence which this Church principle occupies in Old Testament teaching, for every place in which the Jews or Israelites are called by such collective appellations as "Jacob," "Israel," bears witness to it.

Again, when Christ says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden," His words (taken by themselves) appear to encourage sinners, as individual units—considered apart from any organization or Church—to come to Him; but when He says, "I am the true vine. Every branch IN me that beareth not fruit God taketh away," "I am the vine, ye are the branches," it is quite evident that our Lord recognizes something over and above the internal religion of the individual. He considers the individual as

belonging to an organization or body; for a branch of a tree, whilst it is in the tree, cannot but be associated with a multitude of other branches which together make up the tree.

In this similitude of the "Vine and its branches" we have a further development of the idea of the union of the people of God in one fellowship. In the Old Testament they were planted together as in a vineyard. (Isaiah v.) In our Lord's parable they are united in one organization, of which He is the Root or Stem.

Again, the Parable of the Sower may be considered as simply referring to the individual reception of the Gospel by various classes of persons, but the parables of the "Field sown with wheat and tares," of the "Draw-net," and of the "Grain of mustard seed," refer to what Christ was about to establish as being a Church or polity.

Again, when St. James says, "Cleanse your hand, ye sinners, and "draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you," his words may be taken as only recognizing the private personal access of each soul to God. But when St. Paul says that "we being many are one body in Christ," and that "Christ is the Head of His body, the Church," it is quite clear that further considerations come in besides those pertaining to each man's individual intercourse with his Maker.

The extent to which Church teaching, and considerations arising from it, prevail in the New Testament may be judged from the fact that of the thirteen Epistles of St. Paul only one is addressed to a private Christian, and this one is wholly occupied with a matter of domestic interest, and contains not so much as one doctrinal remark. All the remainder are addressed to Churches, or overseers of Churches.

The Epistle to the Ephesians is wholly based on

Church teaching. Every Evangelical privilege alluded to in the first three chapters is supposed to belong to the whole body or Church, as being a part of the body of Christ. Every practical duty urged in the three latter chapters is urged on Church principles, for it is commended to their obedience upon considerations drawn from the mystical union betwixt Christ and His Church, and the coherence of all the members under the One Head.

When it is stated above that we find in Scripture both individual religion and also this great Church principle, it is not for a moment to be supposed that they can be separated.

For what is personal religion? It can only mean the individual submission of each man's soul to God, so that he should receive and realize God's word as the word of his Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier.

Now this word of God clearly reveals that Jesus Christ came not merely to make men individually religious, but to gather them together into a kingdom or fellowship, which He deigns to call His body. He instituted means of grace by which they were to be brought into, or continued in, this fellowship, and after His departure, His Spirit, through the Apostles, expanded and developed this Church element of His system.

If, then, personal religion consists in each one recognizing and realizing God's word as His word, then each one must strive, heart and soul, to realize the truths pertaining to the fellowship of Christ's body, which occupies so remarkable a place in God's word. If a man wilfully fails to do this, he wilfully comes short of what God has revealed, and so comes short of that personal religion which God requires of him.

When once God has clearly revealed a matter, then no really submissive, *i.e.* no really believing soul, can try to evade the reception of it on such a plea as that other

matters are of more importance. A thoroughly enlightened man will say, "I cannot afford to lose one motive to love and serve God. If I regard my Saviour as the 'Word,' and the 'Light,' I must hear His every word, and follow His every leading."

If this Church principle be clearly revealed in Scripture, then no service book can be accounted Scriptural which does not provide for its recognition, and especially does it seem appropriate to recognize it when a person is admitted into the Church; or if he be admitted as an infant, then it should be recognized in any formula in which he is to be instructed before he makes his solemn public profession before the Church.

In embodying this Church principle of Scripture in any formulary used at the admission of a person into the Church, it will be found impossible to evade the question, On what basis is the Church founded—on a broad or a narrow one?

If the Church is founded on the broad basis that all persons professing the faith of Christ, and baptized into His name, are to be accounted as belonging to it; then this must be unequivocally set forth, for in this case the baptized are the Church—or at least are to be accounted the Church so far as this, that they occupy exactly the same position as the people or Israel of God, which the circumcised Jews did before the coming of Christ, and as the whole body of the baptized Corinthian and Galatian Christians did in Apostolic times. On this principle, then, the baptized must all be addressed as responsible for the grace of having been received into the family of God, and for the grace of having been made members of Christ.

If, on the contrary, the Church is established on a narrower or more select basis, as that none are to be accounted

as belonging to it who have not consciously come to Christ and consciously received forgiveness from Him, then this also must, in mercy to men's souls, be most clearly set forth. In such a case the services by which men are admitted into the Church should unmistakably declare the truth, that admission into the so-called visible Church is really nothing, and that admission into a more select inner circle, or invisible Church, has yet to be sought. The rite of Baptism should be made to set forth not its own efficiency, but its own inefficiency. It should declare, on the face of it, that so far from being an ordinance in which God regenerates, it is only to be accounted as witnessing to the need of a regeneration, which God almost invariably confers at some other time, and in the use of altogether different means.

I now proceed to examine as to whether our services, especially our Baptismal Services, duly reflect this great Church principle of Scripture.

There is, of course, but one way of ascertaining whether documents are scriptural, *i.e.* by seeing whether they agree with Scripture. It is needful continually to remind the reader of this, for with many persons the word "scriptural" does not mean "in accordance with Scripture," but in accordance with a certain scheme or form into which they themselves have arbitrarily cast portions of Scripture.

If these services are scriptural they must embody or reflect what Scripture teaches respecting Baptism; they must also reflect or embody what Scripture says respecting the status or spiritual condition of the baptized, for Baptism is but the entrance into a state or condition.

The Scripture teaching bearing upon Baptism may be summed up under the five following heads:

I. In about twelve places in Scripture Christ or His Apostles connect salvation with Baptism.

II. The Christians of the Apostolic Churches are always addressed as having been brought into a state of salvation or regeneration at their Baptism.

III. This state of salvation or regeneration does not insure the final salvation of those brought into it. On the contrary, the members of these Churches are always supposed to be in danger of falling into sin, and liable to be cast away.

IV. Those who thus fall away are always assumed to fall from grace. They are never for a moment supposed to fall into sin because God has withheld grace from them.

V. In no one case are baptized Christians called upon to become regenerate. They are called to repent—to turn to God—to cleanse their hands—to purify their hearts; never to become regenerate.

I. In about twelve places have we things pertaining to salvation—such as the New Birth, Remission of Sins, &c. —connected with Baptism.

These places are the following:

1. *John* iii. 3—5: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto Him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

2. *St. Mark* xvi. 16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned."

3. *Acts* ii. 38: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, for the promise is unto you, and to your children."

4. *Acts* xxii. 16: "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

5. *Rom.* vi. 1—4: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we that

are dead to sin live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by Baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

6. 1 *Cor.* x. 1—10: "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea . . . but with many of them God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness." Taken in connexion with Jude 5: "I will, therefore, put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not."

7. 1 *Cor.* xii. 12—27: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ, for by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body. Ye are the body of Christ and members in particular."

8. *Gal.* iii. 27: "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ."

9. *Eph.* v. 25, 26: "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."

10. *Col.* ii. 12: "Buried with Him in Baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead."

11. *Titus* iii. 5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us by the washing [or font] of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

12. 1 *Peter* iii. 21: "The like figure whereunto even Baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

The proper understanding of the first of these places, John iii. 3—5, is essential to our taking a just view of the whole subject. For it is the one sole reference throughout the discourses of our Lord to Regeneration or the New Birth.

The Church also grounds the necessity of Baptism itself, and its connexion with the New Birth, on this place, when she says at the commencement of the Service, "Forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin, and that our Saviour Christ saith, None can enter into the kingdom of God except he be regenerate and born anew of water and of the Holy Ghost."

In endeavouring, then, to ascertain the bearing of these words on Baptism and on Regeneration, I shall first observe that our Lord here can allude to *one* thing, and *one* only. In the third verse he speaks of a birth, "Except a man be born again," and in the fifth He explains what He means by describing it as a "birth of water and of the Spirit."

If He speaks of one thing, occurring at one point of time, in the third verse, He must speak of one thing, occurring at one point of time, in the fifth; for a birth cannot be divided. It can be but *one* thing taking place at *one* time.

A man cannot be born partly at one time and partly at another. The consideration of this at once disposes of all interpretations which would involve a double birth, that is, a ceremonial birth of water in Baptism, and a moral or spiritual birth of the Spirit, when a nominal Christian becomes a spiritual one.

On this hypothesis our Lord would explain one thing ("Ye must be born again") by two things by no means necessarily connected, and differing from one another so very widely in their relative importance, that no reason whatsoever can be given why He should associate the two together.

The application of water in Baptism is of itself the most insignificant of all ceremonies, whereas the change from sin to holiness is the greatest of all internal changes.

It is not likely then that our Lord can allude, by the words, "Born of water and of the Spirit," to two births so

immeasurably different in their respective importance. For if He meant by being "born of water" a mere ceremony of external profession, and by being "born of the Spirit" the great internal change from sin to holiness, then He would elevate the mere external reception of the ceremonial rite, "born of water," to an equality with the great internal spiritual change; for He calls each by the name of "birth," and asserts that both are needful to salvation.

In the next place we cannot, on any reasonable principle of interpretation, suppose that our Lord meant to impress upon Nicodemus the need of some merely moral change, as, for instance, the change which takes place when a bad man becomes a good one, or a formalist a spiritual man, for on this hypothesis our Lord's second answer ("Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit") instead of explaining His first ("Except a man be born again") increases its difficulty tenfold.

We have one writer laying down that regeneration is simply moral goodness, and asserting that if an unbaptized man has "goodness" before baptism, he has all the essentials of regeneration—all that he receives in Baptism being an increase (generally inappreciable) of what he had before.

But it cannot be supposed, if our Lord meant to impress upon Nicodemus the need of any branch of moral goodness, that He would have clothed His explanation in more difficult words than His first assertion.

If by being "born again" our Lord meant simply being made "good," it is strange that He should have expressed it by being "born of water and of the Spirit," when He could have made His meaning so perfectly plain by saying, "Except ye be good—except ye repent—except ye be cleansed from sin—except ye be renewed in your

affections and desires—except ye be holy—ye cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Again, it is equally impossible to suppose that our Lord meant to impress upon Nicodemus some change synonymous with a strong conviction of sin, or with believing on Him, or with relying upon His merits, or with not trusting in our own righteousness, for such a phrase as "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit," is no help to us in realizing such things.

If by "Except a man be born again" our Lord meant "Except a man believe in me and rely on my righteousness," He never would have explained so plain a truth by so comparatively obscure a circumlocution as "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit."

If being "born again" is synonymous with any such change as conversion, or repentance, or a new heart, then our Lord's second answer, or His explanation, is more difficult than the matter of which it is the explanation; and the difficulty of course arises from the fact of His having associated in His second answer "water" with the Holy Spirit as concurring to produce in a man such a change as regeneration,—if, that is, regeneration be merely what it is popularly but wrongly supposed to be.

The more carefully and reverently we consider these words of Christ, the more impossible will it be found to escape the conclusion that our Lord here alludes to some deep mystery—far deeper than any which attaches to the ordinary working of the Holy Spirit on the heart in convincing it of sin or of the need of Christ's righteousness.

This mystery, too, must be connected with the application of the element of water. The "water" here must be literal water, for no reason can be assigned why our Lord should double the difficulty to a sincere inquirer by ex-

the single metaphor, being "born again," by a metaphor, being "born of water and of the Spirit." "water" here alluded to can be no other than that the administration of the Sacrament of Baptism. place contained the only allusion throughout the ament to an evangelical work wrought by God Sacrament, then we might have hesitated about ence to Baptism here; but when we find that in very other place where Baptism is mentioned, it is with some grace pertaining to salvation, then it ible to resist the conclusion that the "water" here hich God has sanctified to the mystical washing in.

ce is only one out of twelve or more in which taining to salvation are connected with the ini- rument. In three places, for instance, Baptism d with remission of sins (Acts ii. 38, xxii. 16;); in three others with Salvation (Mark xvi. 16; ; 1 Peter iii. 21); in two with a mystical burial (Rom. vi. 1—4; Col. ii. 12).

these facts into consideration, it is impossible to conclusion that our Lord in these words alludes race or blessing associated with, or to be expected Baptism.

r point beyond dispute is that the water, being material thing, cannot of itself contribute to the New Birth. It can only be regarded nstrument by which the Holy Spirit works work, or as indicating the particular time at is pleased to bring about a certain evangelical

Lord's intention, then, in associating such a thing as as a joint agent with the Holy Spirit in bringing the New Birth, cannot be mistaken. It behoves us

to remember that God must have some wise design in thus connecting inward grace with an outward visible sign, and that we must fall in with His design, and humble ourselves to receive mysteries, and not, out of a false and spurious spirituality, determine to give some explanation of the New Birth which will, as a rule, dissever it from Baptism.

The very contrast which we cannot but draw between the worthlessness of the vile element, the water, and the unspeakable greatness of the Other Agent, the Holy Spirit, should make us fear exceedingly lest we proudly set ourselves above Christ, by putting asunder, on rationalistic grounds, things which He has joined together.

It is clear, also, that this birth of "water and of the Spirit" was a mystery unknown to the Fathers of the Old Covenant, as we find no allusion to it in the books of the Old Testament. It must be a New Testament mystery; which it could not be if it were the same as repentance or conversion, both of which terms we find used abundantly in the book of the Old Covenant. It must be also an entrance into a state, and that state the kingdom of God, or present Church of God. Now, the things said of the Church, as the mystical body of Christ, are so great and mysterious, that a supernatural birth, as an entrance into it, seems required by the nature of things.

The next place which demands our attention is Mark xvi. 16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

On this place I would only remark, in passing, that, in a system so spiritual as the Christian Religion, in which so very high a position is ascribed to faith, and which stands in such strong contrast to the Jewish system which it superseded in the very matter of ceremonial and typical observance—in such a system this juxtaposition of two

such things as "faith" and "baptism" in our Lord's last commission is exceedingly noteworthy. How are we to regard the fact that our Blessed Lord Himself associates the deepest principle of our spiritual nature with a mere outward rite? We may treat this matter in one of two ways. We may angrily or contemptuously push it aside, as is usually done, and persist in saying that there is no meaning in it, and that those who strive to give some adequate reason for this connexion are self-deceived formalists; or we may reverently acknowledge the mystery of God's having joined together two such things as both concurring to bring about our New Birth, and confess that His ways are not our ways, nor His thoughts our thoughts.

(3.) Acts ii. 38: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (to be saved.) "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Here remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost are, in the first Christian sermon ever preached, made to depend upon repentance joined with baptism.

So also in Acts xxii. 16: "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins," the washing away of sin is made to depend upon Baptism as the means in the use of which God first formally imparts it. Ananias, who was sent to St. Paul by the Saviour Himself, does not say, "Believe, and thy sins are forgiven," but he says, "Be baptized, and wash away thy sins." We can scarcely believe that a man who had dim or incorrect views on such a matter as the forgiveness of sin would have been sent to such an one as St. Paul.

(5.) In Romans vi. 1—4, all baptized Christians are said to have died to sin, because Baptism is a co-burial with Christ in His grave, and a resurrection with Him out of His grave.

By means of this holy rite,—in no mere figure, but

in some mysterious reality,—the tomb of the Saviour is always open in His Church; so that at the very outset of our Christian career we are accounted to descend into it in and with Him, and to rise again out of it in Him, and so are accounted to have sacramentally suffered death, the penalty of sin, in Him, and to have been made partakers of the very life by which He was revived.

In this sense Baptism is a "death to sin," because it unites the baptized with Christ in His "death to sin" ("He died unto sin once"), and makes him partaker of Christ's risen life; but whether sin is actually mortified in the baptized man, so that he loathes it, and is delivered altogether from its power, is another matter. He is made a partaker of Christ's death[1] and resurrection, *in order that* he *may* walk in newness of life.

We have the same teaching respecting Baptism expressed in the same words in Col. ii. 12, and the same application of that teaching in Col. iii. 1—10.

[1] The death to sin here cannot mean a death to sin in the sense of sin being annihilated, or rendered powerless in the person so dead, and for this reason, that a few verses further on St. Paul writes to these very persons who were thus asserted to be "dead to sin" in Baptism, to exhort them not to "let sin reign in their mortal bodies, that they should obey it in the lusts thereof." If sin were *dead* in them, or if they had *died to sin* in the sense of being effectually delivered from its power and presence, there would be no sense in writing to them to bid them not to allow sin to reign in them, for in such a case sin, so far from *reigning*, would scarcely be *felt* in them. The whole context of the passage shows that the persons thus addressed as "dead," were dead *sacramentally* only [in Baptism,] and not dead to sin in heart and affection, or they would have needed no exhortations of the sort contained in this chapter. Their sacramental death was a step to the mortification of sin, and a reason why they should mortify sin, not the complete mortification of sin. They were to *reckon* themselves dead to sin (verse 11) in order that sin might not reign in them (verse 12).

In Col. ii. 11, 12, the whole Colossian Church is assumed to have been buried with Christ in Baptism, and in Col. iii. these same persons are all assumed to have risen with Christ, and (ver. 3) to have a hidden life treasured up for them in their risen and exalted Head, and yet (ver. 5) they are bid to mortify their members which are upon the earth—fornication, evil concupiscence, and covetousness.

The very same assumption of a sacramental death is required to reconcile the third and fifth verses in this chapter with one another, which is required to make several expressions in Rom. vi. consistent with one another, for in the third verse the Colossian Christians are all assumed to be dead (or to have died), and in the fifth they are bid to mortify fornication, uncleanness, and covetousness.

(6.) In 1 Cor. x. 1—10, it is assumed that all baptized Christians have in Baptism experienced a deliverance analogous to that of the Israelites at the passage of the Red Sea. The greatest deliverance of the ancient Church is thus made to symbolize one supposed to take place in Baptism.

If there be any analogy between these two deliverances, then the one in Baptism must be participated in by the whole body of the baptized, for the salvation at the Red Sea, which was a type of it, was participated in by the whole Israelite Church; and the Apostle fastens attention on this very feature of the type, when he says to the Corinthians, "I would not that ye should be ignorant how that ALL our fathers were under the cloud, and ALL passed through the sea; and were ALL baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea." And St. Jude, in drawing precisely the same lesson from the same chapter of Old Testament history, notices that God saved the *people* of Israel, but afterwards destroyed them that

it shall be imputed if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." (Rom. iv. 23—25.)

Let the reader mark these words. The Apostle here asserts that righteousness is imputed to a man, not when he believes that his sins are forgiven—not when he believes that he is personally justified and accepted—not when he realizes that Christ died for him in particular, —but when he believes that God the Father raised up God the Son from the dead. So at least asserts the Apostle. Whether circumstances require that the strict meaning of his words should be modified I do not stop to inquire.

Again, we find similar words in the tenth chapter of this Epistle: "The word of faith which we preach, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Rom. x. 9.)

Similarly St. Peter says, "You, who by Him do believe in God that raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God." (1 Pet. i. 21.)

Again, when St. John would fill his converts with fulness of joy he writes to them, not God's secret election, not individual assurance, but his own personal witness to the truth of the FACT of the Incarnation. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of Life . . . that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ, and these things write we unto you that your joy may be full." (1 John i. 1—4.)

In accordance with all this, St. Paul, in declaring to the Corinthians the Gospel which he preached, and in which his converts stood, sets forth to them first of all that which also he had received, how that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." (1 Cor. xv. 1—4.)

Such is the aspect under which the Gospel is presented to us in the Scriptures.

What provision does the Church make that this Gospel of the kingdom should be set before her children under the form in which it always appears in Scripture? What means does she employ that it should occupy the same prominent place in her system which it undoubtedly possesses in the Bible?

Very remarkable indeed is the provision which the Church makes for this, for it is by far the most prominent and noticeable thing in her service book. She provides for the setting forth of the Gospel under this its one Scripture aspect by the arrangement of her yearly round of fast and festival. She commemorates the great facts of Redemption on her great days of religious observance.

On these days she sets forth the great features of the Gospel rather as events or facts than as doctrines. She makes these days great days, and she does her best to invest them with a sanctity above that of other days, and this according to their relative importance.

Unquestionably, the Resurrection of Jesus as the seal of His Messiahship and God's own assurance of the full efficacy of His Son's death is the first event in the New Testament, and so Easter is the Queen of Days in the Church's year.

Next to it are Christmas, Good Friday, Ascension Day, and Whit Sunday, as setting forth the Incarnation and

cannot account the believing catechumen saved before Baptism.

The limitation, "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience," shows that the Apostle recognised that God ordained Baptism for the salvation of those whom man in his presumption says have already received salvation, because they already believe. The Apostle, on the contrary, asserts that those who can return the answer of a good conscience towards God are saved in Baptism by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, *i.e.* they receive the grace of His risen life in Baptism. (Compare Rom. v. 10, vi. 4, Colos. ii. 12, 13, iii. 3.)

A very little consideration will serve to show that the sacramental interpretation of this text is in reality the most evangelical of any which can be suggested. It has been said,[1] in order to get rid of any reference to the sacrament, that the Apostle, after expressly mentioning that Baptism saves, means to undo in the next breath the assertion, by explaining that he means by the word Baptism, not the Christian ordinance, but the answer of a good conscience, and so to affirm that the "answer of a good conscience" saves. But if so, then he affirms that something of our own, on which we can rely, and on which self-righteous men do rely, viz. the answer of a good conscience, saves us, which is of course contrary to the first principle of Evangelical Religion.

But no one can suppose that such a thing as Baptism can, of itself, have any saving efficacy. It can only be said to save because it is a means whereby the Saving Blood of the Redeemer is applied to the penitent. The Sacrament in itself is too insignificant to be relied on—it cannot even *seem*, of itself, to have any saving power; whereas, if a good conscience saves, it *seems* to save because of its own

[1] Dr. McNeile in his pamphlet, "Baptism doth save."

sic merit or excellence. The Sacrament can have no glory: it is a passive instrument in the hands of Who alone saves; but then, if we are to believe His , it is His instrument, or at least His token when orks in us a certain work needful to salvation.

ch are the statements of Scripture respecting the its which God is pleased to make over to a man, he duly receives the rite of initiation into the Church rist.

is clear that no Baptismal Service, which professes t forth Christian doctrine on this matter, can for a ent be accounted "scriptural," unless it is in harmony these "Scripture statements;" which it cannot be, s it leads the Christian to expect to receive, or to ve that he has received, some great benefit or benefits is Sacrament.

y service, or formulary, or confession of faith, which l lead men to regard Baptism as a mere edifying rite, solemn dedication, or a means whereby we merely ss an acceptance of Christ's salvation, is unscriptural, at is, to be "scriptural" means to be in accordance express Scripture statement.

does seem an unreal and exaggerated way of speaking, aracterize a mere rite of dedication, or solemn profes- in such extraordinary terms as "a burial and resur- on with Christ;" a means by which Christ sanctifies cleanses His Church, the "bath of New Birth," eby we are saved—the antitype of the Noachic r, whereby we are now saved, and to connect it as ful to salvation with Repentance, Faith, and the ual New Birth.

ien, in the next place, I would remark that there are ounter passages to these—no Scripture statements be produced, which modify these statements or ex-

plain them away—no statements which contrast water and Spirit baptism, so as to lead Christians to believe that God's Son, having solemnly annexed a certain blessing to the due reception of Baptism, has withdrawn that blessing.

The reader will also notice, that if the natural meaning of the above passages be the true one, then the reception of Baptism is a divinely specified link in that sequence of truth, which men call the Plan of Salvation. If Christ declared the terms of salvation in His discourse with Nicodemus, then to be "born of water and of the Spirit" is an essential to salvation. If St. Peter proclaimed aright the plan of salvation in the first Christian sermon ever preached, then to be "baptized for the remission of sins" forms a part of that plan. If there be a true scheme of Christian doctrine revealed in the Epistle to the Romans, then Baptism, as "a burial and resurrection with Christ," forms an important practical feature of that scheme. Amongst the great things pertaining to salvation, grouped together in the beginning of the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, we have "one Baptism" mentioned along with "One Lord," "One God and Father of all."

It is plain, then, that no symbolical book, service book, or confession of faith, can be scriptural which ignores the place of Baptism amongst the great things of the Gospel.

I am well aware that there is great difficulty in ascertaining the relation of this Sacrament to predestination, justification by faith, conversion, and other matters of the highest importance; but what of this? God requires us to believe His statements, not to reconcile them with one another, or determine their exact places in the Christian scheme.

So far for the direct Scripture assertions respecting the

grace which God is pleased to communicate to us in this Sacrament.

II. We now come to consider another point of equal importance with the above direct statements, which is this, that the Christians of the Apostolic Churches are always addressed in God's word as having entered into a state of grace, or regeneration, or salvation, at their Baptism.

The proof of this statement we shall deduce from the Apostolical Epistles. These letters are, with three trifling exceptions, addressed to certain Christian communities, or their clergy.

All the members of these Churches are assumed to be in a state of grace, and that state of grace one and the same in all cases, though it is described sometimes in one way, sometimes in another.

The members of these Churches are all assumed to be ἅγιοι, or saints, or holy; but saints, or holy, not by any means in the sense of being all spiritual, or good, or pure, which they are never all assumed to be, but in the sense of "dedicated" to God, and "set apart," or "consecrated to His service." (Rom. i. 7; 1 Cor. i. 2; 2 Cor. i. 1; Eph. i. 1; &c.)

They are all addressed as "in Christ." (Gal. iii. 27, 28; Eph. i. 1, ii. 21, 22; Phil. i. 1; Col. i. 2.) They had all "been clothed with Christ." (Gal. iii. 27.) They had all been "buried with Christ in Baptism." (Rom vi. 1—4; Col. ii. 12.) As having been all thus buried, they were all to reckon themselves "dead to sin." (Rom. vi. 11; Col. iii. 3.) They had "all by one Spirit been baptized into one body." (1 Cor. xii. 13.) They are all "the body of Christ, and members in particular." (Rom. xii. 4, 5; 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13, 27; Eph. v. 30.) The bodies of all of them are "the members of Christ" (1 Cor. vi. 15), the "temples of the Spirit" (1 Cor. vi. 19). Collectively,

also, they are "the temple of God." (1 Cor. iii. 16.) They are "espoused to one husband." (2 Cor. xi. 2.) They partake in common of one holy and heavenly calling. (Heb. iii. 1; 1 Pet. i. 15, ii. 21, iii. 9.) They all have a birthright, and so are all heirs. (1 Pet. iii. 7; Heb. xii. 16.) They have all "come to the Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (Heb. xii. 22); the heavenly Jerusalem is "the mother of them all." (Gal. iv. 26.) They are "of the household of God," and are "builded together for an habitation of God." (Eph. ii. 19, 21, 22.) They are all in some sense "the people of God." (1 Pet. ii. 10.) They are "within," whilst the Gentiles amongst whom they live are "without." (1 Cor. v. 11—13; 1 Thess. iv. 12.) They are the elect or chosen of God. (1 Pet. i. 2, ii. 9; 2 Pet. i. 10.) They are all sons of God by adoption. (Gal. iv. 5, 6.) They are all the "flock of God." (Acts xx. 28; 1 Pet. v. 2.) They are all begotten by God's will. (Jas. i. 18; 1 Pet. i. 23.) Finally, they are all "brethren." "The brethren" is the common designation of Christians in the Acts and Epistles.

All these terms, each presupposing some grace received from God, are applied to all the members of the Apostolic Churches indiscriminately, and without the slightest reservation expressed or understood.

There is not one word throughout the Epistles which would lead us to suppose that God recognises two Churches, a visible Church of mere professing Christians, and an invisible one of true believers; there is not one word about two callings, an effectual calling, and an ineffectual one; there is not one word about two elections, an inner election to glory amidst an outer election to mere ecclesiastical privilege; there is not one word respecting two brotherhoods, but all are brethren—all are assumed to be in one family, one household.

The reader can form no idea of the extent to which this inclusive mode of address pervades the Apostolical writings, unless he examines them himself with a view to this matter, and marks each place as it comes.

The great Church principle, that God has one Church, the mystical body of His Son—that this Church is, by its very nature, a visible, organized body, and yet that all the members of this Church are assumed to be in God's favour or grace, or to have once been in it—this great Church principle pervades the Apostolic Epistles, to the total exclusion of any counter principle.

Some of the more important Epistles open with its enunciation, in that they begin with salutations to the whole body of Christians in each locality. The Epistle to the Romans, for instance, is addressed to "*all* that are in Rome, beloved of God, called saints." The Epistle to the Corinthians, "To the Church of God which is at Corinth, with *all* that in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." The Second to the Corinthians is directed to the "Church of God which is at Corinth, with *all the saints* which are in all Achaia;" the Epistle to the Galatians, to "the Churches of Galatia."

But, besides this, it must be remarked that these great things said of the Church, are all said with the view of influencing the practice of the individual members of that body.

Does the Apostle, for instance, hold the Roman Christians to have been *all* buried with Christ in Baptism? It is that they may all walk in newness of life, and not allow sin to reign in their mortal bodies. (Rom. vi. 4, 12.)

Does the Apostle speak of them all as being one body in Christ (Rom. xii. 2—6)? It is that *every* man among them may think of himself soberly.

Are the Corinthian Christians reminded (1 Cor. iii. 17)

that they are the temple of God? They are reminded of it in order that they may fear exceedingly lest they defile or destroy that temple. Are they reminded that their bodies are the members of Christ, and temples of the Spirit? It is that they may keep those bodies in temperance, soberness, and chastity. (1 Cor. vi. 15—20.)

Are they *all* addressed as "by one Spirit baptized into one body?" It is that they may regard all their fellow-Christians as fellow-members of Christ's body, and so sympathize with, and care for, one another. (1 Cor. xii. 13—27.)

Are all the Galatian Christians assumed to have put on Christ in Baptism? It is that they may stand fast in Him, and not fall back upon legal works as their justification in God's sight.

Let the reader remark that this assumption, that all the Apostles' converts were members of Christ, and the exhortations to be good and holy grounded on the assumption, are alike general, and stand or fall together. If, for instance, any number of the members of the Corinthian Church had not been engrafted into Christ's body, the whole Church could not with any propriety be bid in perfectly general terms (as they are) to demean themselves as becometh members of such a body. Precepts urging to love and good works, grounded on some common grace or privilege, could not possibly be addressed to all, unless the privilege or grace were the common possession of all.

If it were a matter of great doubt whether some of these persons were really members of Christ, the very first thing to be done would be that each professing Christian should, for himself, resolve that doubt in his own case and ascertain whether he ever had been made a member of Christ; but so far from this the Apostolic Christian are bid to dismiss all doubt upon the subject.

So that whether we regard the terms which the Apostles apply to their converts, or the precepts of holy living which they ground on the fact that such terms are applicable to them all, our position, that all the Apostolic Christians were in the same state of grace, is abundantly proved.

Christians are assumed to have entered into this state not at the moment when they first believed, or when they felt themselves justified, or forgiven, or when the peace of God was first shed abroad in their hearts, but at the moment when they entered into the visible Church by Baptism; for there and then they were buried and raised again with Christ (Rom. vi. 1—4; Col. ii. 12); then they were all baptized into one body by One Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 13); there and then they experienced the deliverance symbolized by the salvation of Noah in the ark (1 Pet. iii. 21), and of the Israelites at the Exodus (1 Cor. x. 1—10); then they washed away the sins of their heathen or Jewish state (Acts xxii. 16), were sanctified and cleansed with the washing of water by the word (Ephes. v. 26), and by God's mercy were saved by the bath of New Birth (Titus iii. 5).

III. Our next point is:—

That this state of regeneration, or salvation, does not necessarily imply present goodness, or final perseverance in the case of all once admitted into it: on the contrary, the Apostolic Christians are always assumed to be in danger of falling into deadly sin, and some of them are reproved for having so fallen.

I desire to draw particular attention to this point, for the opponents of Church principles have asserted that the members of the Apostolic Churches were all enlightened, converted or regenerate persons in the modern and popular acceptation of these terms, and so (they say) we cannot safely argue from the terms used in describing their

state of grace, that baptized Christians now have been admitted into the same state.

It has even been asserted that the Christians of these Churches were assumed by the Apostolic writers to be all *perfectly good*—the end of their course anticipated at the very beginning—nay, that sin was assumed to be impossible in them.

Let us see what the facts are.

The Roman Christians are all assumed to have been "buried with Christ," and so to be "dead to sin" (Rom. vi. 2—4) in Baptism, and yet in the very same chapter the Apostle, so far from accounting them all to be personally free from sin, conjures them not to let sin reign in their mortal bodies. (vi. 12.) He addresses them all as "called saints," and as having received the Spirit of adoption (viii. 15), and yet, so far from presuming that they would finally persevere, he takes occasion to say (xi. 21, 22), "If God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: towards them that fell, severity; but towards thee, goodness—if thou continue in His goodness, otherwise thou shalt be cut off."

The Apostle assumes all to be members of Christ when he writes "I say TO EVERY MAN THAT IS AMONG YOU not to think, &c., for as we have *many* members in one body and *all* members have not the same office, so we being many are one body in Christ, and *every one* members of one another" (Rom. xii. 5); and yet to these members of Christ he says in the next chapter, "Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying" (xiii. 13).

Again, the Apostle writes to all the Corinthian Christians as "the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them which are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints."

He assumes them all to be members of Christ, "by one Spirit baptized into one body" (1 Cor. xii. 13—27), and yet he speaks to them as carnal (iii. 1—3), as—some of them—unjust, and unrighteous, and unchaste (vi. 8, 13—17, 20), as liable to fall by idolatry, murmuring and tempting Christ (x. 1—10). He takes occasion to warn them against gross profanation of the Lord's table (xi. 21), and against unbelief in the resurrection of the body. He bids them awake to righteousness, for some have not the knowledge of God (xv. 34). He beseeches them not to receive the grace of God in vain (2 Cor. vi. 1), he expresses fear lest when he came again he should find not only debates, wrath, strife, backbitings, but also uncleanness, fornication and lasciviousness unrepented of (xii. 20).

He asserts that all the Galatians were children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, because so many of them as had been baptized into Christ had put on Christ (Gal. iii. 26), and yet they had been bewitched, so as not to obey the truth. (iii. 1.) He is afraid that he has bestowed labour in vain upon them, and he is obliged to warn them against such works of the flesh as adultery, fornication, uncleanness, and lasciviousness. (v. 21.)

The Ephesian Christians are all assumed to have been made nigh, to be fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, to be all members of one body (Ephes. ii. 13, 19, iv. 4, 25), and yet the Apostle bids them put away lying, stealing, all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour and evil speaking—not to have fellowship with the works of darkness,—not to be drunk with wine (iv. 25, 28, 31, 32, v. 3, 5, 11, 18.)

The Hebrew Christians are all addressed as "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling" (Heb. iii. 1), but, like their Corinthian brethren, are bid to take warning from the example of the Israelites perishing in the wilder-

ness because of unbelief. (iii. iv.) They are all assumed to have a birthright, and yet they are bid to see, lest any of them, like Esau, profanely sell his birthright. (xii. 15—17.)

Similarly, those to whom St. James writes are all "brethren," "begotten of God's will," and yet these same persons are bid to lay aside all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, bitter envying and strife, speaking evil one of another, and grudging one against another; they are bid to "cleanse their hands and purify their hearts." (James i. 21, iii. 14, iv. 8.)

Similarly, those to whom St. Peter writes are assumed to be a chosen generation, "elect," and "born again, not of corruptible but of incorruptible seed." (1 Pet. i. 2, 23, ii. 9.) And yet they are bid to lay aside "all malice and all guile, and hypocrisies and envying, and all evil speaking," to "abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul," and they are none of them to "suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil doer." (ii. 1, 11, iv. 15.)

Nothing, then, can be more untrue than the surmise that the Christians of the Apostolic age are all assumed to be converted or spiritual men in the modern sense of the words, or even that they are all supposed to be "good," still less that they are all assumed to have final perseverance vouchsafed to them.

Some of them are supposed to be all that even an Apostle desired them to be.

The Apostle hopes the best of all. St. Paul commends the faith of the Roman Church, as "spoken of throughout the whole world." (Rom. i. 8.) The state of the Philippian Church, as a Church, was such that the Apostle "thanks God upon every remembrance of them." (Phil. i. 3.) He remembered too, without ceasing, the "work of faith and labour of love and patience of hope" of the Thessalonian Christians. (1 Thess. i. 3.)

But with all these reasons for thankfulness there are distinct intimations in every Epistle that there were some among them—in some cases many—who were not living Christian lives. These lapsed or lapsing Christians may have been few compared with the faithful ones, but their existence is always recognised.

IV. This brings us to our fourth point.

How do the Apostles meet the case of fallen or falling Christians?

There are two ways in which they might meet the cases of such persons.

When professing Christians sinned, or fell away, the Apostles might use such a fall as evidence that such persons had not received effectual grace in Baptism—that they had never been really engrafted into Christ's Church, and were not to be accounted as brethren. Or they might treat them as persons who had received God's grace and received it in vain, and so were cutting themselves off from His favour after He had received them into it, and were grieving and vexing His Holy Spirit.

Now, the Apostles invariably adopt the latter of these two alternatives and eschew the former.

Those among the Apostolic Christians who fall into sin are assumed to go counter to grace once received. They are never supposed to fall into sin because God has withheld grace—always because they resist grace or receive it in vain.

Thus if the Roman Christians continued in sin, the Apostle assumes that they went counter to the grace which in Baptism had buried and raised them again with Christ, in order that they might walk in newness of life. (Rom. vi. 1—4.) They were, in a sense, *in* God's goodness, because they had been engrafted into the Divine Olive-tree of His Church (xi. 17, 22); unless they *continued* in this they would be cut off.

If the Corinthian Christians defiled themselves, they defiled the temple of God (1 Cor. iii. 16, 17), and would be destroyed accordingly; "for the temple of God," the Apostle tells them, is holy, "which temple ye are." (iii. 17.) If they committed fornication they sinned against the grace of incorporation into Christ, by which their very bodies had been made members of Christ, and the temples of the Spirit. (vi. 15—20.) It was the fact that their members had been once made the members of Christ, which made their sin the more sinful.

If, after the example of the Israelites in the wilderness, they lusted after evil things, committed idolatry or fornication, tempted Christ, or murmured, they went counter to that baptismal grace or salvation of which the salvation of the Israelites at the Red Sea was a type. (1 Cor. x. 1—10.)

When the Galatian Christians fell back upon Justification by the Law, they fell from the grace which had adopted them into God's family, and of which the outward sign and seal was their Baptism. (Gal. iii. 26, 27.)

If the Ephesian Christians gave place to Satan by lying, stealing, speaking defiling language, bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, evil speaking, or still worse sins (Ephes. iv. 25, 28, 29, v. 3, 11), then they grieved the Holy Spirit by which they had been "sealed." (iv. 30.) The commission of these evil things was, in the Apostle's eyes, no proof that they had not been sealed with the Spirit, or that their Baptism had been without its characteristic grace; it was rather a proof that they had received it in vain.

If the Colossian Christians did not mortify their members in the matter of adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, &c., they sinned against the grace which

ıited them in a mystical death and resurrection with
Saviour. (Col. ii. 12, iii. 3.)
he Thessalonians were unmindful of the purity to
they were pledged, and so defrauded one another,
lespised God, who had also given unto them His
Spirit. (1 Thess. iv. 8.)
ɜn the Hebrews denied their profession, by so doing
ıunted the blood wherewith they had been sanctified
, did despite to the Spirit of grace, and forfeited a
ght already received. (Heb. x. 29, xii. 15—17.)
ilarly, the Christians to whom St. Peter wrote are
at they that lacked virtue, knowledge, temperance,
ıd forgotten that they had been purged from their
s. (2 Pet. i. 9.)
ve all, Christians are bid by St. Jude to take warn-
ɔm the doom of the "angels who kept not their
tate." We cannot well imagine beings in a more sure
f grace than angels in heaven, and yet Christians
ırned by two Apostles (2 Pet. ii. 3, 4; Jude 6),
ɛr the example of these wicked spirits they fall away
are their punishment. It seems impossible to draw
ıe inference from such an example, which is, that
ɔaptized Christians fall they fall from grace.
he explanation, then, what it may, no fact is more
than that the Apostles conclude that all Christians
een, or are, in a state of grace, from which state of
they are in danger of falling by even gross and
ıs sins, and of being cast away for ever; and when
hus sin it is distinctly implied that they sin not
ɜ God has not given grace, but against grace which
ı given, and the seal of this grace is their Baptism.
But, lastly, in no one case do the Apostles call upon
ɛ Christians to become regenerate. They are bid
nt—not to receive God's grace in vain—to cleanse

their hands, and purify their hearts; but they are never bid to be born again.

In no single instance does an Apostle call upon any lapsing Christian to enter, as if for the first time, into that state which is allowed, on all hands, to be synonymous with Regeneration. No baptized Christian is ever called upon to become a member of Christ, or a member of His Church or mystical Body. No baptized Christian is ever bid to get himself grafted, as for the first time, into Christ. No baptized Christian is ever called upon to become a saint (ἅγιος), or a brother (ἀδελφὸς). In no one case is a falling or sinning Christian bid to stand in doubt as to whether he ever has been effectually called: he is rather bid to see whether he is walking worthy of a calling wherewith he is always assumed to be called.

The reader can form no conception of the amount of this testimony in favour of Church teaching, unless he examine the Apostolic Epistles, with the view of ascertaining for himself the total absence of any language militating against the principles I have deduced from Scripture in the foregoing pages;—how invariably the Apostles assume that all Christians have received grace; how carefully they avoid all assertions which might tend to throw doubt on the efficacy of the means of grace, or on the fact that all the members of the Apostolic Churches had once been grafted into Christ.

No contrast can be more marked than that which exists between the way in which the Apostles addressed baptized sinners in their day, and that adopted by those in this day who profess to be guided by them. The Apostle addresses the sinner as one who sins against grace: the modern Evangelical addresses the sinner as one who sins because God has withheld grace from him.

Such is the nature of the Scripture evidence for the connexion of Regeneration with Baptism. The professing Christian enters by a new birth of "water and of the Spirit" into the kingdom of God. This "kingdom of God" is the Church, or mystical Body of Christ. The root of all the blessings and privileges of this state is union with Christ as the Second Adam. Through union with Him, as a member of His Body, the Christian receives Adoption into God's family, and a birthright; the sins of his heathen or natural state are done away;—and these privileges are not merely outward, but there goes along with them a certain measure of internal spiritual grace, to enable the member of Christ to apprehend the mysteries of the kingdom of God, and to avoid sin. This Church state, or state of salvation, or state of Regeneration, the professing Christian enters into, or is to be accounted to have entered into, at his Baptism; not (if he has been a heathen) at the time of his conversion; nor (if he has been baptized in infancy) at the moment when he first consciously realized his interest in Christ's promises; but at the moment when he received Baptism: and this because in many places he is supposed to have received things pertaining to salvation at his Baptism—because all the baptized are assumed to have been once grafted into Christ, or into His mystical Body, or saved by the bath of new birth; and, when they fall, they are always assumed to fall from this state of grace and salvation—because in no one case is the baptism of any professing Christian supposed to have been an unreality, or to have been dissociated from its inward and spiritual grace; all exhortations calculated to throw doubt on the reality of the calling of each baptized Christian being carefully avoided by the Apostles.

I shall afterwards consider the adjustment of the re-

spective claims of Faith and Baptism, and, also, how far the blessings which it is assumed that Scripture connects only with the Baptism of adults can belong to that of infants.

I now proceed to examine the Baptismal and other services of the Book of Common Prayer, as to how far they embody or reflect the teaching of Scripture on this matter.

From the express statements and general language of Scripture which I have adduced, it is clear that if these services are to be Scriptural, they must first of all connect the peculiar blessing of the new covenant or dispensation, *i.e.* the new birth, with Baptism.

They must connect this "new birth" with forgiveness, with adoption into God's family, with grafting into Christ's Body, or Church, and with the gift of some internal grace or strength to live to the terms of the Christian Covenant.

Unless our services do this, they would be unscriptural, because they would fall short of express Scripture statements upon this matter.

In the second place, if the services are Scriptural, they must pronounce the baptized to be regenerate, or grafted into Christ's Church, and made members of Christ. They must so pronounce because the Scripture so pronounces, and because the education of the baptized, if it is to be Scriptural, must proceed upon the assumption that he has been brought into Christ's Church and God's family.

In the third place, if our services be Scriptural, they must represent the grace received in Baptism as grace from which men *can* fall; they must represent the inheritance therein assigned to the baptized as one which *may* be forfeited, and the state of salvation into which the baptized are received as one which does not imply final perseverance on the part of those who have received it.

Lastly, if the services are Scriptural, they will give no countenance to the notion that the baptized fall away because God has withheld grace from them, nor to the idea that the Church into which the baptized is admitted is not the one Church or Body of Christ; for God in the Scriptures makes mention of only one Church, and makes no mention whatsoever of any invisible body within the visible, to which invisible Church He may have restricted saving grace.

First, then, the services, if they are Scriptural, will connect the new birth with Baptism, and assume that this new birth implies a grafting into Christ's mystical body, remission of sins, and some gift of God's Holy Spirit.

The Baptismal Services of the Church ground the necessity for receiving Baptism, and its connexion with Regeneration, on our Lord's words to Nicodemus.

Both services begin with a short address, in which is set forth, in Christ's words, that a man must be "regenerate and born anew of water and of the Holy Ghost," and the congregation are called upon to pray that the person may be "baptized with water and the Holy Ghost, and received into Christ's Holy Church."

Here then being "regenerate," is identified with being "born anew of water and of the Holy Ghost." It is also identified with, or connected with, "reception into Christ's Holy Church," which is St. Paul's way of describing the state of Regeneration.

In the next prayer another aspect of Holy Baptism, as set forth in Scripture, is recognised: for God is appealed to as having figured His Holy Baptism, by the salvation of Noah in the ark, and the salvation of Israel at the Red Sea. (1 Cor. x. 1—10; 1 Pet. iii. 21.)

In this prayer we recognise the honour put by God

upon Baptism by the submission of His Son Jesus Christ. It is assumed that the Eternal Son of God Most High could not be baptized in the element of water without consecrating it to be the channel of some heavenly and supernatural benefit.

Seeing then that God has made such remarkable deliverances of His people the types of Baptism, and has so consecrated the use of the element of water by the submission of His Incarnate Son to Baptism, we appeal to Him to do for the persons baptized according to the tenor of such gracious intimations of His good will—that is, to wash and sanctify the persons before Him, that, being delivered from His wrath, they may be received into the ark of Christ's Church, &c.

In the next prayer request is made that the persons (or infants) coming to His Holy Baptism may "receive remission of their sins by spiritual regeneration."

I desire to draw particular attention to this phrase, for the use of it betrays either the deepest spiritual ignorance on the part of the compilers of our Services, or else it claims for them a far profounder insight into the relations of the several doctrines of our redemption with one another, than is possessed by those who now criticise their work.

Judged by the spirit and letter of the modern Evangelical system, no phrase can betray greater ignorance, for if "spiritual regeneration" be a "new heart," or any internal work of the Holy Spirit in enlightening the understanding, then assuredly it is not the instrument by which we receive "remission of sins." Such a prayer is equivalent to asking that we may receive remission of our sins by internal Sanctification, which is so contrary to the very first axiom of (so-called) Evangelical truth, that the man who asserts such a thing is accounted "unen-

d." He has to learn the first rudiments. He has the first step. There is not a local preacher the Ranters who cannot look down with pity upon who shed their blood that we might retain our nglish Bible, and point at our Reformers as unen- ed men, for not at once perceiving the incongruity a phrase with the first principles of Evangelic

if our Services are to be "Scriptural," *i.e.* in nce with express Scripture statement, they must this phrase, or some equivalent one, for the same f which (if the Saviour says so) we must, in con- n with the Spirit, be "born again" (John iii. 5), e same water which is called by St. Paul "the bath of rth" (Titus iii. 5), is that in which St. Peter called on t converts to be baptized *for the remission of sins* (Acts and by which Christ is said by an inspired Apostle nctify and cleanse His Church." (Ephes. v. 26.) us put these things together.

en we come to Holy Baptism, we receive "remission sins by Spiritual Regeneration." Why? Because generation in Baptism God transfers us from the dam, who is our condemnation, into Christ the l Adam, Who is our Salvation from the guilt of sin. e there and then "buried with Christ," and it is to suppose that we can be "buried with Christ" to iritual or evangelical purpose without receiving re- n of sins.

root idea of Regeneration is "Union with Christ, cond Adam," and as by generation we are, in some able way, made partakers of the sin of the first so by Regeneration, which is its correlative and te, we must be made partakers of the atoning of the Second Adam; and so some such phrase as

"Remission of sins by Spiritual Regeneration" is required, if our services are to be considered "Scriptural."

The Gospel in the service for the "Baptism of such as are of riper years," is that part of our Lord's discourse with Nicodemus which relates to the New Birth, and in the exhortation following we have our Lord's commission to the Apostles to preach and baptize. (St. Mark xvi. 16.) In the same exhortation are embodied St. Peter's words respecting Baptism for the remission of sins in his sermon in Acts ii., and also his reference to its saving power in his first general Epistle. (1 Pet. iii. 21.)

We have also St. Paul's peculiar teaching respecting Baptism being a "burial with Christ" (Rom. vi.; Col. ii.), cited in the post-baptismal thanksgiving (that he being dead to sin, and living unto righteousness, and being *buried with Christ in his death*). We have also St. Paul's expression that by Baptism we "put on Christ," cited in the commencement of the address to the newly baptized in the service for adults.

So that we have the greater part of the passages in which the Holy Ghost has seen fit to teach us any truth respecting this sacrament embodied in our services.

For the fact that these passages are all in one direction —all ascribing some great blessing to the right reception of Baptism—the Church is not responsible.

In the second place, if our services are Scriptural, they must pronounce that the baptized are, by their Baptism, regenerate; grafted into the body of Christ's Church, and made members of Christ. If we are to uphold the view of the efficacy of Baptism which is set forth in Holy Scripture, we must assert that Baptism effects now what it effected in Apostolic times—that they who have received it are in a different state with reference to God and Satan—Christ and Adam—the world and the

Kingdom of God—from what they were before; that henceforth they are to be accounted as members of Christ, and are to be trained accordingly.

The Church delivers this judgment on the altered condition of the baptized, when she says by her minister, respecting each person baptized, "Seeing now, dearly beloved, that these persons are (or this child is) regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's Church, let us give thanks unto Almighty God for these benefits, and with one accord make our prayers unto Him that they (or this child) may lead the rest of their life according to this beginning."

Without this assertion, or something as plain and dogmatic, the Church would not be a faithful witness to the doctrine of Baptism contained in Holy Scripture. Her testimony would fall short at a most important point —the point of practical application—for the Apostolic writers assert, or assume, that Christians have received in Baptism the great characteristic gift of the New Covenant, in order that ever after they may be under the most binding obligations to live holily.

To those who realize the mass of Scripture assertion, and teaching grounded on it, which I have drawn out in the preceding pages, this statement of the Church needs no apology. *The absence of such a statement would on Scripture grounds be indefensible.*

In the third place, if our Baptismal services are scriptural, they must set forth the grace received in Baptism as one from which men can fall; for the Scriptures (as I have shown in pages 68—70), so far from predicating final perseverance of those once grafted into Christ, assume that they may fall from their Christian standing, and fall irretrievably.

Now, here I desire the reader to bear in mind that we

cannot look for many assertions of this sort in our Baptismal Services. The administration of Baptism is, of course, a matter of religious joy to any right-minded Christian, and it would be contrary to all right feeling to make falling from God, or coming short of His grace, the key-note of such a service. If, then, we find the danger of falling from grace and not attaining to everlasting salvation once or twice distinctly recognised, it is as much as can be required to vindicate our Services as scriptural on this head.

In the first place, we have a prayer in both Services before the administration, in which we ask God that the person to be baptized may "ever *remain* in the number of His faithful and elect children."

Then immediately after his Baptism he is signed with the sign of the cross, in token that he "must *continue* Christ's soldier and servant to his life's end."

Then after this, the congregation are called on to pray that he may "lead the rest of his life according to this beginning." And when, after being called upon, they *do* pray for him, they ask that being "buried with Christ in His death, he *may* crucify the old man," and "that, as he is partaker of the death of God's Son, he *may* also be partaker of His resurrection, so that FINALLY, with the residue of Christ's Church, he *may* be an inheritor of God's everlasting kingdom."

So also, in the Catechism, the child is made to say, "I pray unto God to give me His grace, that I may continue in the same (state of salvation) unto my life's end."

So in the Order of Confirmation, the Bishop in laying his hands upon the person confirmed is directed to pray, "Defend, O Lord, this Thy servant, that he may *continue* Thine for ever."

So in the form of Solemnization of Matrimony. "It (Matrimony) was ordained for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication; that such persons as have not the gift of continency might marry and *keep themselves undefiled members* of Christ's body."

So, above all, in the Homily of Salvation or Justification (the statements in which, since it is referred to in the Eleventh Article, have more authority than those of any other homily), we read, "Our office is not to pass the time of this present life unfruitfully and idly, after that we are baptized or justified, not caring how few good works we do to the glory of God, and profit of our neighbours: much less is it our office, after that we be made Christ's members, to live contrary to the same, making ourselves members of the devil and not God."

In the last place, if our Services are to be scriptural, they must not give any countenance to the idea that there are two Churches—a visible and an invisible—to the former only of which we are admitted at Baptism, whilst God has restricted saving grace to the latter.

Our Services recognise but one Church—the visible, into which the person is admitted at Baptism; for, first of all, the congregation are besought to pray that the person or child may be baptized with water and the Holy Ghost, and "received into Christ's holy Church, and be made a *lively* member of the same." Here we have, at the very outset, the great Scripture truth set forth in our Lord's parable of the "Vine and the branches," that the One Church has within its pale different characters; not that the "*lively*" members are an invisible Church by themselves.

Then the congregation do pray that he, "being delivered from God's wrath, may be received into the Ark of Christ's Church." Then when the priest signs him, he "receives him into the congregation of Christ's flock."

After this the congregation are called on to thank God that the person is "regenerate, and grafted into the body of Christ's Church;" then they actually do thank God that the child or person is "incorporated into God's Holy Church."

There is then but one Church recognised in the Services, and it is described in terms which leave no room for any other, for it is called Christ's "Holy Church," the "Ark of Christ's Church," the "Congregation of Christ's flock."

In all this Scripture is adhered to, which knows of but one Church, but recognises that that Church is like a "net gathering of every kind," and like a vine, having fruit-bearing, barren, and decaying branches.

I have now shown that the Baptismal Services of the Church of England are scriptural, if scriptural means in accordance with the books of the New Testament.

It will be needful now to consider a difficulty which, in these latter days, has been raised respecting the application of the above to Infant Baptism.

As a rule, we baptize infants who cannot exercise conscious faith; and it is assumed that there is some peculiar difficulty respecting Infant Baptism, or, at least, in pronouncing infants regenerate when they are baptized.

In order thoroughly to sift this matter, it will be needful to consider the relation between Faith and Baptism as it is set forth in Holy Scripture.

Faith is *now*[1] considered as something antagonistic to Baptism. Men think to depress Baptism by exalting Faith; and *vice versâ*—they who uphold the grace of

[1] I say *now*, for it assuredly was not so considered by the leaders of the Reformation, either in England or Germany.

Baptism are assumed, by the very fact of their so doing, to detract from the efficacy of Faith.

Now there is no antagonism between Faith and Baptism so much as hinted at in Scripture. So far from this, the two Epistles which ascribe most to Faith set forth, most unreservedly, the high position of Baptism in the plan of salvation.

The Epistle to the Romans is generally appealed to as decisive in favour of Justification by Faith; and in it we have Baptism plainly set forth as a "death to sin," because in it we are made partakers of Christ's death by being "buried with Him." (Rom. vi. 1—4.) The Epistle to the Galatians was written for the express purpose of upholding the sufficiency of Faith; and yet in it Baptism is described as the needful supplement to Faith, for in it St. Paul lays down that the baptismal putting on of Christ is the proof of our adoption, or sonship through Faith. (Gal iii. 27.) All the Galatian Christians were children of God by Faith, because "as many of them as had been baptized into Christ had put on Christ."

How is it, then, that, with this in their Bibles, many now assume a sort of opposition between Faith and the Sacraments, especially Baptism? It arises principally from the fact that a view wholly unwarranted by Scripture is taken by modern religionists of the intensity of the Faith of the Apostolic Christians, and of the objects on which their Faith rested.

The vast bulk of those who oppose Baptismal Regeneration allow the name of Faith only to what they call a self-appropriating trust in Christ's work, as distinguished from the Catholic belief in the Divine Person and Mission of the Son of God.

The greater part of them go as near as possible towards defining true Faith to be a trust in Christ's work, as *for*

the individual. They lay the utmost stress upon a man being able to say, "MY Saviour," "Christ died for ME," instead of what St. Paul says, "Christ died for *us*," or St. John, "He is the Propitiation for *our* sins."

They then turn round upon those who hold Church doctrine, and say, "You have no right to apply the Apostolic expressions respecting Baptism and the state of the baptized to the present race of baptized Christians, because the Apostolic Christians had all self-appropriating Faith; whereas the present generation of Christians were mostly baptized in infancy, and grow up little better than nominal Christians."

Now we shall be able to ascertain, from one of the Epistles to which I have alluded, somewhat of the nature and degree of that Faith which the Apostolic Christians had, and which entitled them, in the view of the Apostle, to the name of "children of God by Faith." St. Paul wrote to the Galatians to reprove the deficiency of their Faith. They had been beguiled into supposing that Salvation by Christ was incomplete, and required to be supplemented by circumcision and the law. To these persons he wrote, "Ye are all the children of God by Faith in Christ Jesus, *for* as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

Here all the Galatian Christians are said to be "children of God by Faith:" but what was the degree of this Faith in their case? Was it a nominal, or historical, or was it a self-appropriating, realizing Faith? All we know is, that the Apostle simply regarded it as a Faith which had led them to receive Baptism, and that was all. It was, in fact, with many of them, as the whole Epistle shows, only that general reception of the articles of the Christian Faith which led a man to renounce idols, and believe in the Divinity and Messiahship of Jesus Christ.

e thing is certain, that the Apostle cannot here mean
ıith any high degree of it, such as leads a man to
implicit trust in his Saviour; for if the Galatians
ll had that realizing Faith in the efficacy of Christ's
which many now insist on as being the only Faith
nised in Scripture, then St. Paul could never have
ccasion to write such an Epistle to them, for this
le is written solely for the purpose of reproving them
eir want of such Faith.

is absurd, then, to suppose that the Apostle would
ıate *all* these Galatians as children of God by Faith,
meant by Faith self-appropriating Faith; since it is
nt, from every part of this Epistle, that, as a Church,
had not such Faith, for they were relapsing into
sm. Besides, he could not possibly have appealed
eir Baptism (as he does) as a sign that they were
ren of God by Faith, if by Faith he meant some
degree of Faith; for Baptism is not an evidence of
ıighest degree of faith, but of the lowest. It is
'idence that a man believes that Jesus is the Son of
and of nothing more. It is no guarantee that a man
sses Faith which purifies the heart, because of its
ing apprehension of the Saviour's work.

ith this agree all the intimations which we can gather
Scripture of the degree of Faith required before Bap-

When Philip said to the Eunuch who demanded to
ıptized, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou
st," he answered, "I believe that Jesus is the Son of
' (Acts viii. 37.) After St. Paul had enunciated three
les of the Apostles' Creed to the Corinthians ("Christ
for our sin, and was buried, and rose again"), he
l, "so we preach, and so ye believed." And, indeed,
cribe a higher rather than a lower degree of Faith to
Christians of the Apostolic Churches is fatal to the

principles of those who oppose Baptismal Regeneration on Calvinistic grounds; for the Apostolic writers always represent the possessors of this Faith as liable to fall away. (Rom. xi. 20, 22; Gal. i. 6, iii. 1, iv. 9, v. 7; Heb. iv. 14, x. 23.) The higher, then, the Faith is pitched, the more strongly does the language of the Epistles tell against so-called Calvinistic doctrine.

To demand, then, some very exalted degree of Faith before you administer Baptism, or count the baptized to have received its characteristic blessing, is simply unscriptural.

Our Church, it is to be remarked, in this as in other things, adheres closely to Scripture, when she demands of the person to be baptized, not whether he believes that his Saviour died for *him*, as distinguished from others, or whether he has already experienced peace in believing, but whether he believes in "God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary," &c.

All this respecting the nature and degree of Faith bears directly upon the subject of Infant Baptism; and in this way: If we believe that baptismal grace is a reward for some highly-wrought act of Faith, it is, of course, ridiculous to expect that infants should receive it. If, on the other hand, the baptismal blessing is rather an act of pure grace upon God's part, given to those who at present realize *little*, in order that, by its working in them, they may, if they are faithful, afterwards realize *much*, then there is less, if any, incongruity in supposing it bestowed upon infants in their Baptism.

Before entering upon the subject of Infant Baptism, I shall make two remarks, which will, I trust, clear the way to a right view of the whole matter.

If we are guided by Scripture, we can scarcely conlate Baptism apart from the state into which a man is tted by it; just as we can hardly think of a door or a apart from the building or inclosure of which it is ntrance.

the Scriptures, all the baptized are assumed to have ed, at their Baptism, into the Kingdom of God upon . They are supposed to have been baptized then *into* ody, the body of Christ, and so brought "within." are supposed, there and then, to have been made kers of the grace, privilege, calling, brotherhood, relaanctification, or whatever else it may be called, of the tian covenant. If they sin, they are assumed to fall grace; if they do not, they are supposed to conin it.

matter what the difficulty of reconciling all this theories or facts, it is so. There is no other mode of ssing professing Christians in the inspired volume. ptism, then, even in the case of those adult persons show deficiency of Faith, is always assumed to be the ning of a life, the entrance into an inclosure, the ng into a body, the means of joining a brotherhood, lowship. From the moment of his Baptism, a man is, e Apostles, instructed or warned on a different prin- to what he would have been had he continued a en. The highest possible appeal is made to him to olily, for he is appealed to as a member of Christ. w we have no right to baptize infants, if there be doubt respecting the connexion of their Baptism with eration as makes it improper for us to address them, y grow up, in the same way as, if we follow Scripture, ust address persons baptized as adults.

Scripture teaching assumes the certainty of the ed having, at the time of Baptism, received a specific

benefit. "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into His death?"—"Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?" If Infant Baptism involves the after-instruction of the person baptized in any uncertainty on this point, then we have no right to baptize infants; because, as we cannot re-baptize them, we deprive ourselves of the power of addressing them as members of Christ with the same certainty with which the Apostles addressed the baptized in their day.[1]

This point should be thoroughly understood. Baptism is not spoken of in the New Testament as if it were an edifying ceremony, or a solemn dedication. Very peculiar terms are applied to the thing, whatever that thing be, which God confers in it. Whatsoever benefit Baptism is the instrument for conferring upon adults, it must convey the same to infants, or it is a different thing.

II. I would remark, in the second place, that if conscious Faith be essential to the reception of regeneration, either in or out of Baptism, then we have no right to baptize children, much less to pronounce them regenerate when baptized.

If we baptize children on Scripture grounds, we must do so, not that they may make a profession, or be dedicated to God, but that they may receive the gift which God has annexed to the right reception of the Sacrament. Now if conscious Faith be essential before they can receive this gift, then Baptism does not belong to them, because they cannot receive the gift which Baptism was designed

[1] Those who deny baptismal regeneration seem conscious of this, for they seldom, if ever, make use of such terms as "members of Christ:" never certainly in their exhortations to purity. They habitually eschew the use of the highest term which St. Paul employs to denote the union of Christians with their Saviour.

to convey, as long as they cannot, by an act of their own minds, appropriate Christ's work to themselves.

It is no vindication of our practice of baptizing infants, and pronouncing them regenerate therein, to say that we do this as *sealing* them, or *signing* them as fit to receive some blessing afterwards—say, if they are of the number of the elect, or after they have fulfilled certain conditions; for we baptize them, not that they may receive Regeneration in after life, but that they may receive it there and then in their unconscious state; and after baptizing them we pronounce that they have received the gift; for Christians in Scripture are held to have been sealed in Baptism with the Spirit—not to receive it afterwards, but to be sealed with it at the time.

I now proceed to consider Infant Baptism, with especial reference to the Regeneration of infants therein.

We are told that there is no command in the New Testament to baptize infants, and no instance recorded therein of the Baptism of any infant.

We deny this, and say that we find both the one and the other.

We find, first of all, the Redeemer giving the charge, "Go ye and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." We say that, taking into account the whole religious education of the Apostles, the words "all nations," would be understood by them to comprehend persons of every age in those nations.

In the next place, we say that there is a command to baptize infants in the first Christian sermon ever preached, where St. Peter says, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you . . . for the remission of sins . . . for the promise is to you and to your children."

We say, in the third place, that we have the record of

the Baptism of three households (Acts xvii. 15. 33; 1 Cor. i. 16); and when a household is baptized, the immense probability is, that such a household would consist mainly of children, who would come under Baptism in right, not of their own personal Faith, but of that of the head of the household; for if we suppose that these households consisted of adults, we have the difficulty of accounting for the fact that a number of responsible persons suddenly consented to join a despised and persecuted sect because the head of the family did so.

Then, in the fourth place, in two Epistles addressed to members of Christ as such, we find children exhorted as if they were as much members of Christ and a part of His Church as their elders, which they could not possibly be, unless they had been both baptized, and by Baptism had been grafted into Christ.

In Eph. vi. 1, a message is sent to children that they are to "obey their parents in the Lord." Now, all the precepts of holiness with which this Epistle abounds, are addressed to the Ephesian Christians on the specific ground that they are members of Christ's mystical body. In the latter part of the fifth chapter, for instance, husbands are to love their wives, and wives to reverence and obey their husbands, because Christ is the Head of the Church, and the Saviour of the body. Immediately following upon this, there is the message to children, assuming that they are as certainly grafted into the Church as those whose faith, because of their more mature age, would necessarily have a more distinct intellectual apprehension of the truths of Christianity.

Children, then, are addressed by the Apostle as if they were amongst baptized members of Christ's body.

In another passage, (Col. iii. 20) children are assumed to have been buried with Christ in Baptism, for, as I have

above, if we compare Col. ii. 12 with iii. 1—4, d that all the holy precepts addressed to Christians third chapter are addressed to them on the assump- hat they had been buried with Christ in Baptism, grafted into His Church, and so they are addressed ed in one body. Now, if amongst precepts addressed cally to baptized members of Christ there is one to on, it is thereby assumed that children are baptized ers of Christ.

have, then, four distinct New Testament warrants ptizing Infants.

w, it lies upon those who oppose Infant Baptism, to distinctly that our Lord did not contemplate the sion of Infants to discipleship in His words, "Go ye sciple all nations, baptizing them;"—that St. Peter ot contemplate the baptism of children when he ne Jews, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of n the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of . . for the promise is to you and to your children;" ; there were no children in the whole households o have been baptized;—and that the children were baptized whom St. Paul addressed as integral parts urches, all the members of whom had been baptized Christ, or the Apostle could not have addressed as all members of Christ. Of course this cannot be

order, then, fully to ascertain the certainty of we hold on this point, we must fall back upon ples.

there any principles laid down in the Word of God would lead us to receive the Baptism of Infants, or remove any supposed difficulties out of its way?

have at least two such principles.

st we have the analogy between the two Adams,

which bears with startling effect in favour of Infant Baptism, provided that that Baptism be joined with Regeneration.

God has so ordered the course of things in this world, that we all derive our being from one stock, and with our being we derive from our progenitor a principle of evil, and so are by nature "children of wrath." We inherit from Adam a depraved nature—we each one of us receive this evil nature in the womb. We receive this taint before we can exercise conscious Faith. We receive it passively —in a state of utter helplessness, not knowing what we receive.

Such is our generation and our first birth. If God has provided a second birth or regeneration, to be a remedy or the commencement of a remedy for the evils of our first birth, it would seem peculiarly fitting that we should receive the second birth and its attendant benefit in an unconscious and infantile state; seeing that we have received our first birth and its attendant evil in an unconscious or infantile state.

Again, if the essence of this *second* birth be a grafting into Christ, and a putting on of Christ as the *Second* Adam (seeing that by our *first* birth we partake of the sin and condemnation of the *first* Adam); and if there be a rite specified by which we are to be made partakers of this *second* birth, it seems only natural and fitting that we should receive this rite and its remedial blessing under the same condition of infantile helplessness under which we received the curse and taint transmitted to us from the first Adam. The Second Adam, the Lord from heaven, Who has made a full atonement for all sin, cannot be supposed, in the communication of His good things, to come short of the first Adam in the communication of his evil things, which He would do if infants, as such, are debarred from being "born

of water and of the Spirit" into Him, though as infants they have all been born of the flesh into the stock of Adam.

The reader cannot but perceive that this argument is in favour of Infant Baptism, solely because it is in favour of the doctrine of Regeneration of infants in Baptism.

In the next place, we have another principle in the theory and practice of the Old Dispensation. Two thousand years before the time of Christ, God entered into a covenant with Abraham and his seed, and decreed at the same time that each infant, on his eighth day, should enter into this covenant. It is then according to the will of the unchangeable God that He should enter into covenant with those who from their tender age can neither understand nor fulfil the conditions of the covenant.

In so far, then, as Baptism is the sign and seal of a covenant on God's part, there is the greatest antecedent probability that it ought to be administered to infants.

There is also the greatest antecedent improbability that God should first introduce a dispensation intended to be preparatory, and should make provision that infants should be entitled to its benefits, so that they might be brought up as members of His Church; and then, when He introduced the perfect dispensation by the coming of His Only Begotten Son, should repeal this act of grace to infants, and leave them, as far as man can judge, to His uncovenanted mercies, till in later life, they voluntarily make choice of His service.

It must, however, be distinctly remembered, that if Baptism be a real admission into the Christian covenant, it must introduce the recipient to the characteristic blessing of that covenant, viz. Regeneration, or grafting into Christ.

If circumcision effected (which it unquestionably did) that infants should be children of God under the old

dispensation, Baptism must do the same good office for children under the new; otherwise it is a mere empty substitute for circumcision; indeed, not even that, for circumcision was always the effectual door into the Jewish Church, and its blessings. If Baptism does not now admit all infants into the one Church or body of Christ, it does not effect for the infants of Christians what circumcision did for the infants of Jews; consequently, so far as infants are concerned, Christianity is a restraint upon former mercies, not an enlargement of them.

If Infant Baptism be either unlawful, or, as a rule, unattended with its inward grace, there would be no covenant sign to assure us that infants are grafted into Christ's Church, as there was to assure the Jews that their children were grafted into the Jewish Church.

We have, it is true, no command to baptize our infants on a particular day, as the Jews had to circumcise their children on the eighth day. But what of this?

In this respect Infant Baptism, so far as the New Testament is concerned, is in a better position than the keeping of Sunday.

There is no command throughout the New Testament to keep holy the *seventh*, much less the *first* day of the week. Almost every notice of the Sabbath in the Gospels is adverse rather than otherwise to its being adopted (except with great modifications) as a Christian institution. In all lists of sins (such as that in Galatians v.), Sabbath breaking is omitted. St. Paul expressly says (Col. ii. 16), "Let no man judge you . . . in respect of the New Moon, or of the Sabbath days." And yet we do keep holy the first day of the week as a Sabbath of rest, and respect it as God's day; assuredly believing that by so doing we are preserving to all classes, and especially to the poor, a precious means of grace.

We argue that if the labouring man among the Jews had a Sabbath of spiritual refreshment and bodily rest, much more ought the labouring man among Christians. We cannot believe that the coming of Christ would deprive His people of such a privilege. And so as regards Infant Baptism, we say that if the Jewish child were entitled in his infancy to receive a rite by which he was adopted into God's family, much more will the child of the Christian be entitled to a similar, but greater privilege.

Then, in the third place, we have the manifest teaching of our Lord's words and significant acts respecting those who, through infantile imbecility, or lunacy, or possession, were unable consciously to come to Him.

The case of such persons is very distinctly recognised and disposed of by our Lord.

In three of the Evangelists, it is recorded that "young children were brought to Christ that He should touch them," or "lay hands on them," and "pray." The disciples endeavoured to prevent this, at which our Lord was "much displeased," and said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." (Mark x. 13.) This incident is very decisive, both in favour of Infant Baptism, and of our accounting infants Regenerate therein.

In the first place, these children were brought to Christ as children, in order that they might receive some blessing from Him through an outward rite—the "laying on of His hands," or His "touch." They were not brought to be instructed. They were rather brought to receive a blessing which they could not realize at the time, on account of their tender years. They were brought to receive this blessing through the "touch" of Jesus, or through the laying on of His hands; the significance of

which they could no more understand than our children can understand the significance of Baptism.

It is plain, also, that the blessing looked for was of a spiritual nature; for if they had been afflicted with any disease, the cure would have been recorded, and the disciples, in such a case, would have encouraged, rather than opposed, their being brought to Jesus.

They must have been brought to receive an inward spiritual grace through an outward visible sign, for the laying on of the Redeemer's hands was not the blessing itself, but the outward means of its conveyance.

The more this incident is considered the more decisively it will be found to meet all objections against either Infant Baptism or Infant Regeneration in that Baptism. It shows us that God recognises (as we should expect that He would) the difference between the infantile, and the adult state, and accords to the former what could not be accorded to the latter, for Our Lord could not have laid His hands indiscriminately upon so many adults, as He did upon these infants. If the adults were capable of exercising faith in His power, He must have required them to exhibit that faith. An adult must have recognised in the laying on of His hands the outward token of invisible blessing, but Christ expressly permitted these infants, as infants, to receive an outward rite as a token of grace from Him. He has taught us by this that conscious faith is only required in the case of those who are able to exercise it.

Just as by His natural law written in our hearts He has led us to confer benefits on those who can neither thank us, nor realize what they receive from us, so by this incident He has assured us that in His own kingdom of grace He acts on the same principle.

Again, a large proportion of the miracles of our Lord

appear to be recorded expressly to teach us that Christ dispenses with faith in cases where, from some physical reason, it cannot be exercised. For instance, in the account of the healing of the centurion's servant—the second miracle recorded by St. Matthew—we have our Lord giving life and health to one who comes under His notice not in virtue of his own faith, but of that of his master. (St. Matt. viii. 5—13.)

So also in the case of the "sick of the palsy," recorded in the next chapter, "Jesus seeing their faith" (that is, the faith of the bearers) "said unto the sick of the palsy," &c.

In this chapter we have no less than three instances of Jesus healing, on the strength of the faith of others, persons of whose own faith the narrative makes no mention. The "man sick of the palsy" (verse 2): the "daughter of the ruler" (verse 18); and the "dumb man possessed with a devil." So also in chap. xii. 22, we have the account of one healed who could not have himself exercised faith, being possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb.

The touching narrative of the "woman of Canaan" (Matt. xv. 21), and of "the man who brought his lunatic son" (xvii. 14), teach the same lesson; and these form a very large proportion of the miracles recorded by St. Matthew.

The fitness of infants, as compared with adults, to receive spiritual blessings, and the favour with which God looks upon them, is again noticed by our Lord when, to rebuke the ambition and self-seeking of the Apostles, He sets a little child in the midst of them, and places such an one above the Apostles, who had left all to follow Him (St. Matt. xviii. 3), and tells them that unless they are converted so as to be like little children, they cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.

If, then, the men who possessed such conscious faith as the Apostles possessed had yet to be conformed to the

likeness of little children, surely the little child can, on his own standing, as a redeemed human being, be regenerate and grafted into Christ's Church.

The argument, then, respecting Infant Baptism stands thus.

We have a Sacrament ordained by Christ Himself as the means whereby we are to enter into His Church, or mystical body, *i.e.* into the Regenerate State. Christ calls this entrance a "new birth," that is, a "birth of water and of the Spirit" into His kingdom.

The fact that by our generation, or birth, we receive, in a state of perfect unconsciousness, the germ of a sinful nature, would lead us to give this rite to infants, that the evil which they have unconsciously received by union with the *first* Adam at their *first* birth, may be remedied by grace received in a like unconscious state through union with the *Second* Adam at a *Second* Birth.

The great principle of Infant Church Membership which pervaded the preparatory and less gracious dispensation, would lead us to suppose that Baptism, the entrance into the one visible Church of Christ, should be accorded to the children of Christians, just as circumcision, the outward sign and seal of Church membership, was accorded to the children of Jews.

Our Lord, by the example of His own gracious dealings with children, removed all objection on the score of want of conscious faith or repentance.

In accordance with all this, we have our Lord giving a commission to baptize, in terms which those who heard Him would naturally suppose included infants. We have St. Peter, in the first Christian sermon ever preached, expressly mentioning children among those to whom belonged remission of sins; and this after he had just mentioned Baptism as the means through which remission was

to reach men. We have the record of the Baptism of at least three whole households; and we have children addressed by St. Paul as members of the Church, in two of his Epistles, written expressly to baptized members of Christ's mystical body.

Infant Baptism, then, is scriptural, because Infant Regeneration, or grafting into Christ's body, is in evident accordance with the intention of the Saviour, and the mind of the Spirit. Baptism especially belongs to infants, because the blessings which it was ordained to convey especially belong to them.

The especial fitness of infants, as such, to receive Regeneration, or Incorporation into Christ's Church, is expressly laid down in the Article of the Church of England on Baptism, in which it is declared that "The Baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as *most agreeable* with the institution of Christ" (ut qui cum Christi institutione optime congruat).

Any Church, then, which professes to be guided by Scripture must connect Regeneration with the Baptism of Infants, and must pronounce infants there and then grafted into Christ, as distinctly as it pronounces adults to be so, who come with a credible profession of faith.

Such accordance with Scripture principles and precedents we have in the Prayer-book. We have there a Baptismal Service for Infants, in which the same assertions are made respecting the effect of Baptism on infants as are made respecting its effect on adults. After its Baptism, each infant is pronounced "regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's Church."

Another point of agreement between the Word of God and our formularies now demands attention.

The Church baptizes infants, because she holds that Infant Baptism best agrees with the intention of Christ in

the institution of Holy Baptism. The Church of England, also, as a true mother, takes every precaution to insure that, after Baptism, children may be brought up in the faith of Christ. To this end, she has retained the primitive institution of sponsors. She has, by so doing, endeavoured to interest five persons, rather than two only, in the spiritual welfare of the child. She has also, by this, borne witness to the fact that children are presented at the font rather in the faith of the Church than on the ground of their parents' faith; a door being thus opened even for the children of heathens and unbelievers, provided security can be obtained for their Christian education.

On these accounts, it has been said that the Regeneration of the child depends on the faith or sincerity of the sponsors. It has also been said, that as we must judge of the sincerity with which the sponsors have returned answers to the solemn questions put to them, not absolutely, but charitably, so we can only put the same charitable construction on the assertion of the Regeneration of the child.

But we are, surely, not at liberty to make the benefit of a Scripture ordinance dependent on a condition not hinted at in Scripture—namely, the sincerity of sponsors; sponsors themselves not being mentioned in Scripture.

Now, we have the strongest possible practical protest against the notion that the Regeneration of the child depends upon the sincerity of the sponsors, in the fact that we have a third Baptismal Service—that for the "Private Baptism of Children in Houses"—in which the child is baptized without sponsors; and, immediately after he is baptized, thanks are offered up to God, that "it hath pleased Him to regenerate the infant with His Holy Spirit, to receive Him for His own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into His Holy Church."

In the supplemental part of this Service there is a rubric, explaining its intention, which is that "it is expedient that [the child] be brought into the church" (*i.e.* the building), "to the intent that if the Minister of the same parish did himself baptize that child, the congregation may be certified of the true form of Baptism by him privately before used." All through this Service, the reception of Regeneration on the child's part is assumed to have taken place when the form of Baptism was administered in the house. The Minister is directed to say to the congregation, "Doubt ye not, therefore, but earnestly believe, that He *hath* (not, *will*) likewise favourably received this present infant, that He *hath* (not, *will*, as in the other Services) embraced him in the arms of His mercy, and, as He hath promised in His Holy Word, will give unto him" (*i.e.* if he continues in God's service) "the blessing of eternal life." And in the prayer after the Lord's Prayer, a petition is put up that the child may abide in Christ: "Give Thy Holy Spirit to this infant, that he, *being* [now] born again, and being made an heir of everlasting salvation, may *continue* Thy servant."

This is as clear an indication as possible that our Services do not predicate final perseverance of all those who are regenerate, and admitted into Christ's Holy Church.

I have now, I trust, fully and clearly set forth the doctrine of Holy Baptism, as contained in Scripture, and the agreement of our Services with that doctrine.

The limits which I have prescribed to myself forbid my noticing a number of objections which the reader may find in the publications of the day. For specific answers to all of these which are worthy of any notice, I must refer him to two of my treatises, "The Sacrament of Responsibility," and "The Second Adam and New Birth." In the first of these, he will find the Church doctrine

proved from Scripture, and the usual common-place objections of such writers as Messrs. Spurgeon and Ryle, and Drs. McNeile and Cumming, fully met and answered. In the second of these publications, I have examined the whole word of God, with reference to its bearing on the state of grace in which the people of God, whether Jews or Christians, are supposed to be.

I have gone through each of the Apostolic Epistles *seriatim*, with reference to the fact that all the Christians to whom they are addressed (no matter what their religious characters) are assumed either to be in grace, or to have fallen from it. I have also drawn out fully the analogy between the two Adams, and its bearing on the transmission to us of their respective natures; and have devoted a considerable part of the volume to the relations between the doctrine of Predestination and that of Baptismal Grace. I am not so presumptuous as to suppose that I have made every difficulty clear, and obviated every objection; but one thing I am sure I have done—I have shown that whatsoever difficulties attach to this matter are Bible difficulties, not Prayer-book difficulties. The Prayer-book statements upon this matter are a mere echo of Bible statements.

The difficulties attaching to the reception of certain Prayer-book statements, and their reconciliation with certain other statements and with facts in daily life, attach equally to certain Bible statements respecting Baptism and the state of the baptized, and *their* reconciliation with facts in daily life.

Take two instances.

St. John, in his First General Epistle, lays down the ideal of the regenerate state as perfect freedom from sin—"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." Now, taking this as it stands, it is not merely at variance with certain statements in our Service, but, first of all,

with the fact that no sect or party has ever asserted, and no sane man has ever believed, that a man, from the time of his conversion, is absolutely free from sin; and, in the second place, St. John here is apparently at issue with his brother Apostle, St. Paul; for the highest state of grace which St. Paul recognises is that of a "member of Christ:" and we have seen how St. Paul considers the sin of some among his converts the more sinful because they had once been made members of Christ.

The Church of England, in the matter of Baptism and Baptismal Grace, adheres to the language of St. Paul, and, I may say also, to that of St. Peter and St. James; for all these three Apostles contemplate the possibility of the regenerate man sinning. (See above, pages 68—70.)

If she did not, she would commit the absurdity of making one or two difficult statements of one short Epistle overbear the plain statements of all the rest of the New Testament.

I have gone fully into the interpretation of the expressions in St. John's General Epistle, in the 14th chapter of my "Second Adam and New Birth," and shown how St. Augustine's interpretation is the true one, being the only one by which they can be reconciled with the statements of the other Apostles, and of St. John himself. I only mention them now to show that the use which some have made of them does not affect the statements of the Prayer-book, but those of the Bible.

Take a second instance.

There are certain statements in the 17th Article asserting Predestination, Election, and the Final Perseverance of those who, by a decree "secret to us," have been designed by God to receive everlasting life. There are also certain statements which the Church directs to be made respecting each person who has been admitted into her

fellowship, that he is "grafted into the body of Christ's Church," *i.e.* regenerate and certainly, for the time being, in the favour of God.

These two statements, which are assumed to be contradictory, are the counterpart of certain statements in the New Testament.

There are statements in the Scriptures which imply an election to eternal life. There are other statements, far more numerous, which assert that all in the visible Church are, or have been, in the actual grace of God, and which imply that there is no degree of grace from which man cannot fall away. The difficulty is not in reconciling the statements in the Prayer-book respecting Election with those respecting grace bestowed upon all the baptized, but in reconciling with one another the corresponding statements in the Scriptures upon both these topics.

The difficulty lies wholly in the Scriptures. The statements in the Prayer-book, either on one side or on the other, are the mere echo of the Scripture statements.

Before concluding this subject, I must consider briefly a construction put upon these services by a large number of clergymen. I mean the hypothetical interpretation: sometimes designated as the view of "hope and charity."

On this principle we are supposed to pronounce the child regenerate, not absolutely, but hypothetically, *i.e.* if certain conditions are fulfilled, of which fulfilment we are ignorant; as, for instance, if he belong to God's Secret Election, or if his parents, or god-parents, are true Christians, or have exercised faith—we are supposed to assume charitably that these conditions have been fulfilled, and, not knowing anything to the contrary, we give the child the benefit of the doubt, and pronounce him regenerate.

Of late a very high place in the exposition of Scripture

has been demanded for this "hypothetical view." It has been said to pervade the whole word of God. By it we are called upon to qualify all God's addresses to His people. In particular the mode of address adopted by the Jewish prophets in addressing *all* the Children of Israel as "children of God," and a "holy people," and the same language taken up by the Apostles in addressing all their converts as "members of Christ" and "children of God," is asserted to be capable of rational (!) explanation only on this hypothetical principle. The Israelites are on this view assumed to be "children of God," because some of them were so. The Corinthian Christians are assumed to be "members of Christ," because some among them had been so made, and the glory of the few is supposed to be transferred to the many.

The terms of grace applied by the Apostles to the whole Church are not to be got rid of on this principle. It creates far more difficulties than it solves; indeed, I do not know that it solves one difficulty, whilst it creates the enormous one of obliging us to maintain that the language of the inspired writers in addressing the Church is deceptive, and has to be qualified before it can be received.

Assuming, however, for argument's sake, the truth of this theory, let it be carefully remembered that the Bible and the Prayer-book are in precisely the same position with reference to it. If the hypothetical principle is required to reconcile certain statements in the Prayer-book with certain facts or theories, it is equally required to reconcile corresponding statements in the Bible with the same facts or theories.

Assuming, then, for a moment, the truth or feasibleness of this theory, a very little consideration will serve to show, that practically it makes no difference (so far as regards our treatment of the baptized as regenerate) if we

adopt it; provided only we carry it out honestly and consistently: for the Bible and the Prayer-book alike pronounce all the baptized to have been "grafted into Christ's Church:" and when the baptized fall afterwards into sin, the inspired writers most distinctly, and the Prayer-book by implication, treat them as having fallen from grace, or as having sinned against grace.

Now this assumption is never lost sight of or dropped, either in the Bible or in the Prayer-book;—never, I mean, dropped so that the baptized man should be addressed as a heathen, and bid to become, as for the first time, "a member of Christ."

So that, on Church principles, we are required to *believe* that a man is really made a member of Christ in Baptism; and ever afterwards he is to be addressed as having been received into Christ's Church: and, on the hypothetical principle, we are required to *assume* that the child has been made a member of Christ; and if we adhere to the precedents furnished to us by both Bible and Prayer-book, this assumption is never to be cast aside; for when the person baptized afterwards falls into sin, we are still to assume that he has fallen from grace—in fact, to adhere to our original hypothesis respecting him.

No difficulty that I can see is removed by this theory.

On Church principles, you have the difficulty of believing that God has, in such a simple rite as Baptism, made the person a "member of Christ." On the hypothetical theory, you have the difficulty of accounting for the fact that God requires you to assume that He has regenerated the person baptized, when, in all probability (according to your view of regeneration), He has not; and the further fact, that if the man, after baptism, falls into sin, you are to adhere to the assumption.

But this theory has not been honestly and consistently

carried out. It has been applied to explain certain statements in the Baptismal Services, and then abandoned. The child has been pronounced regenerate at the time of Baptism; but if, afterwards, he turns out unspiritual or sinful, then he is at once assumed *not* to have received grace in Baptism. His after-course of sin is taken to prove that God has withheld grace, not that he has fallen from it.

This is not Scriptural. If we affect to derive our hypothetical theory from Scripture, and explain the Scripture statements respecting the members of the visible Church hypothetically, then we must address the baptized, if we see them sin after Baptism, as sinning against grace, for this is what the Apostolic writers do.

With the decrees of God's Council respecting individual souls we have nothing to do, so far as this matter is concerned. They are, as our Article declares, "secret to us;" but we have to follow that "will of God which we have expressly declared unto us in the Word of God:" and this expressly-declared will, in a thousand places of Scripture, is, that He has one Church—that all the members of this Church partake of the grace of His Covenant, and that, if they sin, they are to be accounted to have fallen from grace, not to have never received it.

It will be necessary to advert very briefly to another point before I conclude this part of the subject.

If I have cited Scripture faithfully in the preceding pages, then we unquestionably derive from Scripture the doctrine that grace is connected with Baptism, and that all the baptized are assumed to have received grace therein; in other words, we derive from Scripture the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration.

Doubts, however, have been expressed, by many clergymen, as to whether the Church of England really teaches this doctrine.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Church requires her ministers to assert over each baptized person that he is regenerate, it is said that the Articles express the doctrine more feebly than the Prayer-book does—that the Articles of the Church are her true standard—and that, therefore, her doctrine on this subject is uncertain. I believe that the history of the Baptismal Service and Articles compared shows, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that there *can* be no discrepancy between the Articles and the Liturgy on this point.

It is very commonly asserted, that the Baptismal Service represents the Roman Catholic doctrine previously held, which is supposed to be that Regeneration is conveyed absolutely; and that the Articles represent the Protestant doctrine, which is assumed to make the connexion between Baptism and Regeneration more uncertain, if indeed there be any connexion at all. Now, there might be some colour for this assertion, if our Baptismal Services were derived from, or translations of, the old unreformed Services; which services (it is assumed) were full of assertions of Baptismal Regeneration.

But what is the fact? Why, that our Baptismal Service (I mean, of course, that of 1552) is the most purely Protestant, so far as its origin is concerned, of all our services.

It contains far less matter derived from the Old Service books than any other part of the Prayer-book.

It is altogether a new service derived from purely Protestant sources. Only one of its numerous prayers (that beginning "Almighty and Immortal God") being found in the old Baptismal offices.

Now, if our Reformers did not believe in the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration, they had the fullest opportunity for expressing that unbelief by omitting out of the New Services all assertions respecting the Regeneration of the person baptized.

But they do the very opposite of this. They compose an almost entirely new Service, into which service they insert a categorical assertion of the Regeneration of the person baptized—there being no such assertion in the Old Romish Service.

In the Old Service the only recognition of any benefit which the child has actually received, is an indirect assertion in a prayer which the priest was directed to say when he anointed the infant.

"Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus, who hath regenerated thee of water and the Holy Ghost, and hath given unto thee remission of all thy sins: He vouchsafe to anoint thee with the Unction of His Holy Spirit, and bring thee to the inheritance of everlasting life."

This prayer, which had been retained in the Service of 1549, was omitted in that of 1552, and in its place was substituted the present direct assertion that the infant is "regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's Church," and the thanksgiving, in which we render to God thanks that "it hath pleased Him to regenerate this infant with His Holy Spirit, to receive him for His own child by adoption, and to incorporate Him into His Holy Church." And we proceed to predicate of the child baptized that he is "dead to sin" and "buried with Christ in His death."

Now, if our Reformers did not hold so high a view of the benefits of Baptism as was held by the Church before the Reformation, how can we possibly account for the fact that they should require us to give thanks for benefits (in word at least) so much greater, and more numerous than those recognised in the Old Services? And if they were more doubtful as to the connexion of these benefits with the rite of Baptism, why should they have gratuitously inserted into their new Service such a downright assertion

that the child is regenerate, there being no such assertion in the unreformed Service?

But the Articles are supposed to modify this. How is this possible, if the Articles came from the same hands, and were published at the same time? Our present Baptismal Service first saw the light in 1552. The Articles were agreed upon in the same year, though not published till May, 1553.

It would have been most unaccountable for men to have published a new Baptismal service connecting, by the strongest categorical assertion, the inward grace with the outward sign, and then and there prepared articles to nullify their own work.

It is impossible to suppose that men who knew their own minds would thus wantonly pull down with one hand what they built up with another.

Let us now examine the doctrine of the original Articles. We shall find that it exactly accords with the doctrine of the service published at the same time. Of course I quote, in this investigation, the Articles of 1553, which, on this matter, say exactly the same thing as our present Thirty-Nine Articles.

The Article on Sacraments contains the following:—

"Sacraments ordained by the Word of God be not only badges and tokens of Christian men's profession; but rather they be certain sure witnesses and effectual signs of grace and God's good will towards us, by the which He doth work invisibly in us; and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in Him."

Here we are taught that the Sacraments are SURE witnesses, and EFFECTUAL signs of grace. In the Baptismal Service we practically acknowledge that the Sacrament which has just been administered has been a "*sure witness*" of God's good will to that particular child, and an "*effectual*

sign" by which God has invisibly worked regeneration in him; for when the child has been baptized the minister is directed to assert that he is regenerate, and grafted into the body of Christ's congregation, and thanks are returned to God that "it hath pleased Him to regenerate this infant with His Holy Spirit, to receive him for His own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into His Holy Congregation." (Service of 1552.)

And all this accords with what the congregation have been called upon to believe would take place in the words, "Doubt ye not, therefore, but earnestly believe, that He will likewise favourably receive this present infant, that He will embrace him with the arms of His mercy," &c.

If our Reformers held such a meaning of the term Regeneration, as must practically dissever it from Baptism; or if they held the connexion of Baptism with Regeneration under a multitude of restrictions and reservations, how could they have possibly framed an Article which defined a Sacrament to be a *sure* witness of God's good will, and *effectual* sign of grace; knowing all the time that the connexion of the inward grace with the outward sign was anything but certain; and how could they, at the same time, bring out a Service in which the apparent doctrine of the Article is practically recognised by our thanking God for the Regeneration of every child baptized?

But in addition to this Article on the Sacraments, there is an Article on Baptism itself, which is little more than a repetition, with special application to Baptism, of what was said in the Article on the Sacraments. Baptism is there called a

"Sign or seal of our New Birth; whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive Baptism rightly are grafted into the Church; the promises of forgiveness of sins, and our adoption to be the sons of God, are visibly signed and sealed: faith is confirmed: and grace

increased, by virtue of prayer unto God. The custom of the Church to christen young children is to be commended, and in any wise to be retained in the Church."

Comparing this Article with the previous one on the Sacraments, we must evidently understand the term *sign* here as meaning an *effectual* sign of grace; and in the case of Baptism, of course this grace is Regeneration. If, then, Baptism is a *sure* witness and *effectual* sign of the grace which God instituted it to convey, then God works the grace invisibly in us when we receive the sign.

In accordance with this Article, we assert in the Service, that the infant when baptized has actually received the inward grace of which the outward sign is the sign.

A sign of Regeneration, is a sign that the man who has received the sign is Regenerate, just as a sign of wealth is a sign that the person in question has, or possesses, wealth.

But, in addition to this, Baptism is called a "seal" of our New Birth. Now, a seal is appended to a deed of gift, or to any other grant, when the donor, who has promised it, actually makes the thing promised over to the receiver, and thereby assures the possession of it to him.

In accordance then with this Article, we acknowledge in the Service, that the Baptism of the particular child baptized, is a seal of his New Birth, whereby, as by an instrument (or deed), he having, as far as we can possibly tell, received Baptism rightly, is grafted into the Church. We acknowledge that the "promises of forgiveness of sins, and his adoption to be the son of God, are *visibly* signed and sealed" to him, for we thank God that He has made the child "His own child by adoption."

And we proceed to pray, that the child being "buried with Christ in His death *may* crucify the old man, and *utterly abolish the whole body of sin*," thereby acknowledging that "grace is increased by virtue of prayer to God."

CHAPTER IV.

HOLY COMMUNION.

SECTION I.

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION.

"*And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is My body. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.*" (Matt. xxvi. 26—29.)

"*And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is My body. And He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And He said unto them, This is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the Kingdom of God.*" (Mark xiv. 22—25.)

"*And when the hour was come, He sat down, and the twelve Apostles with Him. And He said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the Kingdom of God shall come.*

"*And He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is My body, which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for you.*" (Luke xxii. 14—20.)

"*For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.*" (1 Cor. xi. 23—34.)

"*Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice,*

*acrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye
: have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the
and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's
and of the table of devils. Do we provoke the Lord to
sy? are we stronger than He?"* (1 Cor. x. 14—22.)

*hen they that gladly received His Word were baptized: and
ne day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.
hey continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellow-
nd in breaking of bread, and in prayers."* (Acts ii. 41, 42.)

*nd upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came
r to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on
orrow; and continued his speech until midnight."* (Acts
)

*erily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath
rting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat
n in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which
down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.
the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man
this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will
my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The
therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man
s his flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily,
unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink
lood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh, and
th My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the
ay. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink
. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth
, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live
Father: so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me. This
bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did
nna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for
These things said He in the synagogue, as He taught in
naum. Many therefore of His disciples, when they had heard
aid, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? When Jesus
in Himself that His disciples murmured at it, He said unto*

them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray Him. And He said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto Me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

"*From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray Him, being one of the twelve.*" (John vi. 47—71.)

I NOW come to the subject of Holy Communion—what truths respecting this Sacrament we gather from Holy Scripture, and how far these truths are embodied in our Service.

There are four or five other places (1 Cor. v. 7, 8, xiv. 16; Heb. x. 19—22; Luke xxiv. 30; Acts xxvii. 25) in which those who recognise the rightful position of Holy Communion in the Christian system, will discern an allusion to it; but they cannot be safely appealed to in support of any doctrine which cannot be collected out of the passages which I have given in full at the head of this chapter.

Doubts have also been expressed as to whether our Blessed Lord refers to Holy Communion in His discourse recorded in John vi. I shall presently show that the whole structure of His discourse demands such an allusion.

If the above-cited passages comprise all the Scripture places in which the Holy Spirit has taught us any truths respecting this Sacrament, then any doctrinal or devotional formula, if it is to be accounted Scriptural, must be founded upon, and be in strict accordance with, these places.

Before, however, we proceed to examine them, it will be needful to call attention to the *Person* of the Divine Being who instituted this Sacrament.

Before men practically divest this Sacrament of all mystery, let them, as they value their souls, ponder the unspeakable mystery which belongs to the *person* of Him who ordained it, and the awful greatness of the occasion on which He ordained it.

For He who then blessed and break bread, was "He whose goings forth have been from old, of everlasting."

If a mere man institutes a memorial of himself in certain terms, we must measure what he says by a merely human standard; but if the Son of the Most High, the Eternal Word, is made flesh, in order that He may redeem us by His death and give His flesh and blood to be our meat and drink; and if, just before His death, He ordains a rite in certain very wonderful words, then it is another matter altogether.

He Who ordained the Eucharist was infinitely mysterious in regard of His *Person*, for He had two whole and perfect natures, the Godhead and manhood, in one *Person*.

The fulness of the Godhead dwelt in His very body, and yet it was in all respects the body of a sinless man. When men saw Him, they saw the Eternal Word (1 John i. 1—3). When men heard Him speak, they heard God speaking to them. When one, a few days after this last Supper, handled His flesh, and exclaimed, in adoring wonder, "My Lord and My God," he was not blamed.

Now, this unspeakable mystery attaching to the *Person* of the Redeemer must lead the thoughtful mind to expect very deep things indeed in such words and acts as those in which He instituted the Eucharist, and should make us fear exceedingly, lest, in stripping them of all mystery, we make them void.

An impugner of Eucharistic doctrine in the last century complacently lays it down, that "no other meaning or interpretation is to be put upon these words [*i.e.* the words in which Christ ordains Holy Communion] but what is agreeable to the common rules of speaking on the like occasions."

In answer to this he was asked,—

"Pray, sir, where must a man look for a like case? Does the world afford us any case like it? Have the speaker, or the thing spoken, anything in common life like to either of them? How vain is it therefore to refer us to the common rules of speaking in the like cases when the whole world affords us neither any person like Him that spoke, nor anything or case like the thing or case here spoken of."[1]

So that the infinite mystery of the *Person* of Him who ordained the Eucharist, is to be borne in mind at every step of our inquiry into its nature and intent.

Ever remembering this, let us first consider the four accounts preserved to us in Scripture of the institution of the Eucharist. (Matt. xxvi. 26—30; Mark xiv. 22—25; Luke xxii. 14—20; 1 Cor. xi. 23—34.)

Let the reader first notice that in all these accounts the words of the Lord respecting the bread are the same. St. Matthew records that He said, "Take, eat, this is My body." St. Mark that He said, "Take, eat, this is My

[1] William Law, in "A Demonstration of the Gross and Fundamental Errors of a late book called 'A Plain Account of the Nature and End of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.'"

body." St. Luke omits the words "Take, eat," but tells us that He said, "This is My body," and that He added, "which is given for you;" thereby seeming more emphatically to identify that which He "brake" and "gave" with His body, which was about to be crucified.

St. Luke also records (which St. Matthew and St. Mark had omitted) that our Lord added, "Do this in remembrance of Me."

According to St. Paul, our Lord said all that SS. Matthew, Mark, and Luke respectively ascribe to Him, "Take, eat, this is My body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of Me."

Let the reader note here that it pleased our Lord to give to St. Paul a separate and direct revelation of the Institution of the Eucharist: for the account as contained in 1 Cor. xi. is prefaced by the words, "I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you." St. Paul must have had many revelations respecting our Lord's life and teaching; and yet the one only circumstantial account which he gives of any act of Christ is this account of the Institution of the Holy Communion, and it is all but word for word the same as that given to us by St. Luke.

Such a fact cannot but impress upon believers the exceeding importance of the matter so revealed.

If, then, we are to be guided by the Scripture accounts, the first object of the Saviour in ordaining this Sacrament was to give to men that which He called His body, and which He called by no other name; for all unite in testifying that He said, "This is My body," and two of the witnesses, SS. Matthew and Mark, make no mention of any other words which He spake respecting the bread.

But in addition to this, all accounts testify that our Lord gave a cup of wine as well, and called it His blood.

According to St. Matthew, our Lord "took the cup, and

gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins;" or, as St. Mark more briefly renders His words, "This is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many."

According to St. Luke, He more directly connected the cup with the New Covenant, which He was then inaugurating, "This cup is the New Testament [or Covenant] in My blood, which is shed for many."

According to St. Paul's account, He said over the cup the same words as St. Luke records, adding afterwards, "This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me."

According, then, to the accounts of the two first Evangelists, our Lord intended in Holy Communion to give men that which He called His "blood shed for them."

According to SS. Luke and Paul, He intended in Holy Communion to make them partakers of the New Covenant in His blood. That is, by partaking of that which He designated as His blood, they partook of the New Covenant purchased and sealed by His blood.

In the whole transaction, we have before us Jesus Christ as a Divine Giver. First, blessing, breaking, giving, and saying, "take eat;" then, taking the cup, and saying, "drink ye all."

The first impression which we have, is that of an ordinance in which Christ *gives*, and we *receive* something —not an ordinance in which we DO something.

So our first impression of Holy Communion must be that it is a *means of grace*, not a *work*. It is a means in the right use of which we look to *receive* from Christ: and all that we receive at the hands of Christ we receive of grace.

The first idea of the Lord's Supper, then, is in accordance with the spirit of that dispensation in which we are

now living, which is a dispensation of *grace*. Christ giving to us That whereby we are to glorify Him.

In the right use of this ordinance, our Blessed Redeemer must have intended to make us partakers of some amazing benefit. Everything concurs to assure us of this. The Infinite Greatness of Him who thus offered to men His body and His blood. The unspeakable greatness of the occasion, for it was on the eve of the world's redemption. The spirit of the whole dispensation, which the Son of God was then setting up—a dispensation in which God gives "*unspeakable* gifts." The extraordinary nature of the terms He applied to what He gave, "This is My body," "This is My blood," taken in connexion with the still more extraordinary terms in which He had some time before spoken of His flesh, that it should be the "life of the world."

To all these considerations we must add that of the great danger of unworthily receiving: for they that receive the bread and cup unworthily are "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord," and "eat and drink damnation to themselves, not discerning the Lord's body." (1 Cor. xi. 27, 29.)

When such a Saviour as the Scriptures reveal to us offers to us His body and His blood, we may be quite sure that the benefits of right reception will be commensurate with the danger and curse of unworthy reception—so that if they who receive unworthily are "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" and receive "damnation," they who receive worthily will partake to their infinite spiritual and eternal gain of the body and blood of the Lord, and receive to themselves the opposite of "damnation."

What, then, does the Lord here offer to His people?

Our Lord first gives One Thing, which He calls His

Body, for having blessed and broken certain bread He, in some sense, identifies it with His body, for He says, "This is My body." And so with the cup, only with this difference, that according to SS. Matthew and Mark, the Saviour says, "This is My blood of the New Covenant." According to SS. Luke and Paul, "This is the New Covenant in My blood; that is, it is His blood so as to convey the New Covenant, which that blood sealed.

We have now to set before ourselves that secret thing, to understand which belongs in very deed only to the Lord our God. We have to set it before us not in order that eyes of flesh and blood may pry into that which God has shrouded in mystery, but that eyes of faith may hope for, and look to receive, and expect nothing short of what God offers.

This secret thing is the way in which the Saviour identifies the bread and wine with His body broken and blood shed for us. How we are to explain the words, "This is My body." "This is My blood." In what respect the bread is our Lord's body, and the wine His blood.

After our Lord's blessing, were these elements in any real and true sense bread and wine, or were they in any real and true sense the body and blood of Christ?

Nothing in God's word requires us either to explain or understand these words of Christ. But, inasmuch as two explanations have been given, both easy to understand, but both overthrowing the nature of the Sacrament, we are forced to show that the words of Christ cannot admit of either.

SECTION II.

TRANSUBSTANTIATION UNSCRIPTURAL.

i first of these so-called explanations obliges those old it to deny that what we receive in Holy Com- n is in any real sense bread and wine.

i other obliges those who hold it to deny that what ɔeive in Holy Communion is in any real sense the ınd blood of Christ.

› first of these explanations is that of the Church of , which, in her authorized formularies, asserts in plain , that after consecration the bread is no longer bread r sense, but the natural body of the Saviour; only, rcy to our weakness, and in order that we may not from such food, God graciously permits it to retain e appearances of bread, such as colour, shape, taste, And so with the cup. The Church of Rome asserts he cup contains the actual blood of Christ, and no r any wine at all, but that God, in compassion to ı weakness, suffers it to retain the appearance, and , and taste of wine.

ıw, the Holy Spirit forbids us to hold any such view, ı the Scriptures inspired by Him, the bread is from o last called "bread." "The bread which we break, ıot the communion of the body of Christ?" Again, .postle three times calls the bread after consecration , "As oft as ye eat this bread," *i.e.* the particular l which has been consecrated, "ye do show the Lord's ı till He come." Again, "Whosoever shall eat this l . . . unworthily, shall be guilty of the body . . . of

the Lord." Again, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread." (1 Cor. xi. 26—28.)

In all these cases, the thing spoken of as bread, and so as remaining bread, is that bread which has been consecrated.

And still more plainly are we taught that after consecration the wine in the cup remains in substance the same as before, for our Lord called it, after blessing or consecrating it, "This fruit of the Vine."

So that respecting each kind in this Sacrament, words are said or written from which we are bound to infer that both bread and wine remain, as to their natural substances, what they were before consecration.

But upon this view of the presence of Christ's body and blood I shall dwell no longer at present, as my concern in this book is not with those who hold a gross and carnal view, but with those who virtually deny any presence of Christ's flesh and blood in Holy Communion.

Let me, however, remind the reader that the Romish view of the presence of Christ's body and blood is devoid of all mystery. Its principle is strictly rationalistic, for it is an attempt to render the whole matter intelligible, and to bring it down to the level of human thought and reason. Transubstantiation, or the doctrine of the substance of the elements no longer remaining, but giving place to the actual flesh and blood of the Redeemer, turns the Sacrament into a miracle in which the Almighty power of God suddenly substitutes one thing in its natural substance in the place of the natural substance of another thing.

According to this view the Holy Sacrament is not a mystery, but a miracle. The miracle may be surpassingly great, but it is perfectly intelligible. When once you apprehend the terms which describe it, you have not to ask another question about it.

If there is any difficulty about it, that difficulty does not attach to the apprehension of it, but to this—that God should require us, after such a carnal and earthly manner, to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man. If He requires such a carnal and earthly feeding, then transubstantiation is a perfectly rational and intelligible explanation of the mode of Christ's presence to enable us to do so.

SECTION III.

THE MERELY FIGURATIVE VIEW.

We have now to consider an error diametrically opposite to that of transubstantiation.

After the Reformation, persons calling themselves Evangelical believers broached the doctrine that the elements are to be accounted nothing more than figures, types, or emblems of flesh and blood not present, but absent; and that we feed on the body and blood of Christ in Holy Communion, only in the same way as we may by a strong figure be said to feed on His body and blood, when we are moved by a sermon on His atoning Sacrifice, or when we mentally contemplate His love in dying for us.

According to this view, the bread and wine are merely intended to refresh our memories as to the great fact of redemption, and whilst partaking of them we are, by an act of the memory, to realize that Christ's body was broken, and that His blood was shed for us upon the cross.

So that when Our Saviour said, "Take eat, this is My body," according to this view He really said nothing more than "Devoutly contemplate My Atonement." "Inwardly digest the truth that I suffer as your propitiatory Sacrifice."

"Feed in your hearts upon the doctrine of My mediation."

But to interpret, "Take, eat, this is My body," as if our Lord meant "Inwardly realize your part in My atonement" is secretly felt to be so unlikely—to explain a command which enjoins the receiving and eating of material food, as meaning really a direction to go through a certain mental process, is felt to be, on the face of it, so incongruous and unnatural, that those sects or parties who once adopted it have gradually dropped it, and with it every aim at realizing the meaning of the words, "This is My body," and have of set purpose thrust aside every view of Holy Communion, except the one which regards it as a simple memorial feast, and so to be partaken of, not in order to our receiving anything which Christ offers, but as a means whereby we are to work a certain work, viz. that of professing our individual faith in His atonement.

I shall now show that this view of Holy Communion as a mere commemorative rite, must be false—destructive of all Faith in the Sacrament as a means of grace, and so subversive of the intention of Christ in instituting it.

First, then, the idea that our Lord blessed and brake the bread, and gave it to His disciples as a mere figure, is contrary to the whole tenor and spirit of the New Dispensation, which is a system of realities, and not of figures; of anti-types, and not of types.

The leading difference between this dispensation, and the Jewish, which it superseded, consists in this, that in the Jewish the great truths of the Gospel were veiled under types, and their mere outlines were dimly discernible in shadows; whereas, under the Gospel, we have the realities of which the Jews had but the prefigurements, and the substances of which they had but the shadows.

The merely symbolical view of Holy Communion would make it appear that our Lord instituted a legal typical rite in the centre of an Evangelical system—a rite, too, by no means, of itself, so well calculated, as the slaying of the Paschal Lamb, to bring to mind the sacrifice of Himself.

The slaughter of a lamb, and the sprinkling of its blood, would far more effectually typify, or remind men of, the atoning death of Christ, than the blessing and breaking of a morsel of bread, or the drinking of a few drops of wine in a chalice. So that on the mere memorial, or typical view, no reason whatsoever can be given why our Lord should have superseded one rite, which, by actual blood-shedding and death, would vividly remind men of His death, by another rite, in which the sensible reference to His death is so much weaker—there being in it no bloodshedding and no death.

If our Lord, by "This is My body," had meant, "This is merely a figure, or type, or emblem," it would assuredly have once at least been so written in the Scriptures. At such a solemn time He would not have used words which would almost of necessity prove a snare to believing hearts. By the Church from the very first—in times when to be a Christian was to be a persecuted outcast, these words have been taken as if by them He ordained something infinitely more than a mere type or figure. Even the great leaders of the Reformation, though they may have differed among themselves about the mode in which the bread was to be identified with His body, have accepted His words as implying, and indeed bringing about, a real though spiritual presence.

It cannot be supposed, then, that He who knew all the future of His Church would, without one qualifying or warning expression, have used language so misleading.

There are four accounts of the words which Christ

spake on this occasion, and in not one is the bread called a type, or figure, or sign. The writers, too, of these accounts do not strictly adhere to the words of Christ. Two of them, SS. Paul and Luke, add words—"Do this in remembrance of Me"—which the others omitted, and two of them give the sense rather than the exact words of Christ respecting the cup, when they record that He said, "This is the New Covenant in my blood." But this sense which they give of Christ's words wholly forbids us to look upon the cup as a mere figure or type. It is the New Covenant in His blood. Covenants in old times were not ratified with the figure of blood, but with blood itself. So far from being a mere figure of blood, then, it must be blood in its most intense spiritual reality, as ratifying the New Covenant betwixt God and the communicant.

Besides this, we have in St. Paul's Epistles certain Eucharistic teaching which, without doubt, implies some mysterious communication through the elements. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion"—*i. e.* the communication to us, or the partaking, as our Article renders it, (not the figure,)—"of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communication" (not the type) "of the body of Christ?" And then the Apostle proceeds to assert a most remarkable result of partaking—"We being many are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread" (1 Cor. x. 17)—*i. e.* because we partake of one bread, which is the communion of Christ's body, we are all incorporated together in one body. So far, then, from the bread being a figure only, the right and worthy partaking of it is followed by the highest conceivable result, viz. Union with Christ as the Head of His mystical body.

Besides this, St. Paul writes words of dreadful import respecting those who profane the Lord's Table, which imply

that the relations of the elements to the things which they represent are, to the wicked, a most terrible reality—"Whosoever shall eat this bread ~~and~~ or drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." (1 Cor. xi. 27, 29.) With such words in Holy Scripture, it is very perilous to argue for the bread and wine being mere figures or images.

If figures, they are accounted of by God, and to be accounted of by man (so far as their profanation is concerned), as identified with the thing which they figure.

All, then, which the Scripture reveals concerning this Sacrament is on one side—all leans in one direction—all points one way; for all leads the submissive heart to look for what is high and mysterious, rather than what is low and rationalistic. And no view can be lower and more rationalistic than that the Holy Eucharist was instituted to remind us of the Atonement, or to enable us publicly to profess our faith in it.

But we are reminded that figures are continually employed by New Testament writers. And it is suggested that as our Lord undoubtedly uses figurative language at other times, so He may on this occasion.

We shall have little trouble in showing that the supporters of the merely figurative view not only gain no advantage by any appeal to the acknowledged figurative language of Scripture, but are convicted by this very figurative language of miserably undervaluing this Sacrament as an "effectual sign of grace, and God's good will towards us, by which He doth work invisibly in us."

First, let us take the figurative expressions—"I am the door," "I am the true vine." The essential difference between these modes of speaking, and that employed at the institution of the Eucharist, will be perfectly clear, if

we consider that to make the cases parallel our Lord when He instituted the Eucharist should have said in taking and breaking the bread, "I am the true bread," or in the case of the cup, "I am the true sacrifice." In which case the eyes of His Church would have been directed from the bread, which would then have been clearly a mere figure, to Himself; but instead of this, He, for the moment, *directs attention from Himself to the bread*, as being His body; and similarly with the cup.

If, then, the words, "This is My body," "This is My blood," are to be explained by the expressions, "I am the door," "I am the true vine," we must render them as if Christ said, "This is verily and indeed My body," "This is the very reality and power of My blood;" for "I am the door" means, "I am the true door," "I am the entrance into the innermost sanctuary of God." "I am the vine" means, "I am the vine, not in figure, but in truth and reality, because I am that in a true and living manner to you which the vine is in a poor earthly, perishable manner to its branches."[1] So that the strict teaching of these two Scripture types is all in favour of some high communication in the Eucharist.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews throws a very striking light upon the figure of Christ being the door or entrance into God's presence-chamber, when he teaches us that the "new and living way for us is through the veil, THAT IS TO SAY, Christ's flesh." If, according to him, we would use Christ as the door, we must come *through His flesh* into God's presence. (Heb. x. 19, 20.)

Another figurative expression in Exodus xii. 11—"It is the Lord's passover," has been ignorantly appealed to, which also recoils on those who cite it in favour of the merely figurative or typical view.

[1] William Law.

A moment's consideration will serve to show that the Paschal Lamb there alluded to was in no sense a type or figure of the Lord's Passover, *i. e.* of the Lord's *passing over* the houses of the Israelites, for in such a case the type would in no single feature correspond with the reality. The destroying angel passing over certain houses and smiting the firstborn in certain other houses, is in no respect imaged forth by the slaying of a lamb.

The slaughter of the lamb, and the sprinkling of its blood, was to the Israelites the *reality* of the Lord's passing over; for when the Israelites slew the lamb and sprinkled its blood, then the Lord actually passed over their houses; so that it was to them verily and indeed the Lord's Passover.

SECTION IV.

EXAMINATION OF JOHN VI.

It will be needful now to inquire into the meaning and application of the wonderful words spoken by Christ in the synagogue at Capernaum. (John vi. 47—64.)

If, in this discourse, Christ refers either to Holy Communion, or to some blessing which He would lead us to seek in the right use of Holy Communion (which as far as our argument is concerned amounts to the same thing), then we must take these words of Christ into full account in any endeavour which we make to realize what Christ offers to us in this Sacrament.

First, then, this discourse of Christ is the only one in which He uses language at all similar to that which He used when He ordained the Eucharist. He here speaks

of men having to "eat His flesh" and "drink His blood," and at no time does He use expressions which have any resemblance to these, except on the night on which He instituted the Lord's Supper.

He speaks elsewhere of Himself being the Vine, the Shepherd, the Door, but never of His flesh being food, and His blood being drink, except when He offered His flesh for food and His blood for drink at the institution of the Eucharist. So that we cannot but infer that by His discourse in Capernaum He would lead His disciples to desire what He afterwards offered to their faithful reception when He said, "Take, eat, this is my body."

We cannot suppose it otherwise, for He Who in Capernaum told His disciples that men must "eat His flesh" and "drink His blood" is the very same Person who, in the upper chamber at Jerusalem, offered to the same disciples what He called His body and His blood. There could not have been an interval of more than a year between the delivery of the discourse and the institution of the Eucharist, and He who spake the words in the synagogue was the One Human Being of whom alone it could be said with absolute certainty, that "He knew what He would do."

Is it possible, then, that He should say such words as, "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed," and not have before His eyes that Last Supper, when, on the eve of a world's redemption, He offered to these same men what He called His body and His blood?

And yet one reads in expositions written by Christian men such words as, "The Lord's Supper was not yet instituted, and therefore it (*i.e.* this discourse) could have no reference to that," &c.

When we read this we are constrained to ask, "Was Jesus Christ the Son of the Living God? Did He know

what He would do? Did He never speak of things before they came to pass, that when the things did come to pass men might believe? Does not our Lord, in the very next chapter, refer to the gift of the Holy Spirit, as if it was already bestowed, though it was not bestowed till after His Ascension? "If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture saith, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But," the Evangelist remarks, "this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive, for the Spirit was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." (John vii. 37—40.)

If He thus invites men to come to Him for His Spirit, though it was expressly stated that the "Holy Ghost was not yet given," why should He not prepare men for what He would offer to them in His Supper, though that Supper was not yet instituted?

The fact of the Holy Communion having been instituted after the delivery of the discourse in Capernaum, is decisively in favour of the view, that our Lord therein refers to some great Sacramental mystery; for we cannot but suppose that our Lord would have prepared His disciples for the reception of the Eucharist before He gave it to them. It has been well said, "If Christ had appointed an institution, or positive rite, which related to nothing that He had before taught, it must have been very unaccountable. Thus, to command us to eat His body and drink His blood in the Sacrament, if He had not beforehand taught that we had our life from Him, and that His flesh was our meat indeed, and His blood our drink indeed, had been very unaccountable."

Let us now see what we can gather from this discourse. Christ had miraculously multiplied five loaves and a few

small fishes, so that they sufficed for five thousand persons; the multitude thereupon pursued Him, in order to take Him by force, and make Him a King. He reproved and exposed their motive in pursuing Him with such earnestness. "Ye seek Me," He says, "not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled. Labour (or work) not for the meat which perisheth." The people catch at the word labour (or work) and ask, in the same low spirit, "What shall we do that we may work the works of God?" (v. 28.) To this our Lord replies, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." After this our Lord assures them that God can give them more precious bread than that which their great law-giver Moses gave them, and from heaven also. "Moses gave you not that bread from heaven, but My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven." "For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world." Still, apparently unable to apprehend any higher meaning, they ask "Lord, evermore give us this bread." Jesus then directs them plainly to Himself. "I am the bread of life. He that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst."

And then He proceeds to say some hard things respecting the cause of their unbelief. "Ye have seen Me and believe not. All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me." And again, "This is the Father's will which sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing."

Again, we are told, the Jews *murmur;* and I would ask the reader to mark well at what sayings of Christ they stumble and fall; for this reveals to us what was at the root of their unbelief respecting the life-giving nature of Christ's flesh; and their unbelief is the type of similar unbelief amongst ourselves.

The Jews are offended, not because Christ asserts God's sovereignty in such words as—"All that the Father giveth to Me shall come to Me;" not because He asserts salvation through faith in Himself, saying that men must believe in Him and come to Him, but because He says, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." *They stumbled at His Incarnation*, for they ask—"Is not this Jesus, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He saith, I came down from heaven?" They saw in Jesus a man of flesh and blood like their own. It was not as yet given to them to know that this flesh of His was LIFE, because the Word, who was with God and was God, and in whom was *life*, was made flesh. That flesh they saw, *and they judged of it as they did of any other flesh.*

After assuring them that none come to Him except they are drawn of God, at which deep truth, again reiterated, they do not stumble, our Lord repeats what He had said (in verses 29, 33, and 35)—"He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life (v. 47). Why? Because the Saviour proceeds to say, "I am that bread of life:" implying, of course, by this, that he who believes on Him hath everlasting life, *because* his belief will lead him to *feed* on the *food* whereby he can live for ever.

As a man cannot have temporal life without eating bread suitable to the support of that life, so a man cannot have eternal life without eating bread suitable to the support of that eternal life.

And he that truly believes in Christ as the "Bread of life," will, as the consequence of such belief, feed on Him in every way in which He offers Himself to be fed upon, just as he who believes that the bread which perishes is needful to sustain animal life, will, as a natural consequence of such belief, feed upon it.

But how, and in what way are we to feed upon Christ?

In a way far above that in which the fathers of these Jews ate manna, for our Lord immediately proceeds to say, "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die." The Jews ate manna carnally. With carnal hearts they ate carnal food. Not after such a sort must *they* eat who would eat the bread which cometh down from heaven.

They who would eat, and not die, must prepare their hearts. They must hunger in their souls. They must eat worthily. (1 Cor. xi. 27.) They must eat discerning what they eat. (1 Cor. xi. 29.) They must examine themselves as to their belief in all that Christ says about Himself—His Body—His Blood—His Church—His Sacraments.

Upon this the Saviour comes more particularly to specify how He is to be eaten.

And here we come to the great turning-point in this wonderful discourse—for we come to a remarkable change of language, and the introduction of a new element of thought altogether; *for the Saviour at this point fixes attention on a part of Himself rather than on Himself.* He begins the verse with reasserting "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever," and He ends the verse with defining the bread which He gives to be His flesh—"The bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

This change of expression was, of course, instantly caught up by His adversaries. The Jews strove among themselves, saying "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?"[1]

[1] "As this secret power to bestow life, of which He has spoken, might be referred to His *divine* essence, He now comes down to the second step, and shows that this *life* is placed in His flesh, that it

As long as He spoke about *Himself* being the bread of life, they neither stumbled nor started at the idea of eating Him. What they had previously stumbled at was that He had said that He came down from Heaven, but as soon as He proceeded to narrow this eating to the eating of His *flesh*, then, they ask, "How can this man give us His flesh?"

Let us now humbly and prayerfully consider the meaning of this remarkable change of language.

The modern popular, or Zuinglian explanation of the words of Christ in this discourse, is, that eating Christ's body means inwardly realizing the doctrine of His atonement. If this be the true meaning of Christ's language here, then this change of expression was made apparently for no purpose. It cannot be accounted for. The low, rationalizing view which prevails now discards all idea of mystery, but on such an hypothesis it would be perfectly inconceivable that our Lord, at this stage of His discourse, should have added to the difficulty of all that He had been saying, by defining the bread to be His flesh.

Other plain and simple words would have at once made His meaning clear; dissipated all mystery; given occasion to no carnal views of any sort; and made superstition, so far as the Lord's Supper is concerned, impossible. All would have been clear if our Lord had said—"The bread that I will give is My doctrine," or "The bread that I will

may be drawn out of it. . . . But an objection is brought, that the flesh of Christ cannot give life, because it was liable to death, and because even now it is not immortal in itself; and next, that it does not at all belong to the nature of flesh to quicken souls. I reply, that though this however comes from another source than from the flesh, still this is no reason why the designation may not accurately apply to it; for as the Eternal Word of God is the fountain of life (John i. 4), so His flesh as a channel conveys to us that life which dwells intrinsically, as we say, in His Divinity."—Calvin on John vi. 51.

give is the Bible," or "The bread that I will give is My enlightening Spirit," or "The bread that I will give is a sense of My love," or of pardon, or of acceptance.[1]

If the eating of His flesh be, after all, the mentally feeding upon His atonement, or any truth respecting Himself, no reason can be assigned why He should have veiled so plain a thing under a figure so mysterious and obscure.

As one has well said, "These words evidently declare, on the face of them, some very great mystery. How can they be otherwise taken? If they do not, they must be a figurative way of declaring something which is not mysterious, but plain and intelligible. But is it conceivable that He, who is the truth and love itself, should have used difficult words when plain words would do? Why should He have used words, the sole effect of which, in that case, would be to perplex, to startle us needlessly?"

There is no mystery whatsoever in the idea of feeding on a doctrine or truth of God, and inwardly digesting it, and so having the soul strengthened by it.

Nor is there any mystery in the idea of feeding upon a person—we naturally mean by it, feeding upon the thought of one who is absent, dwelling upon the past tokens of his love.

Now if our Lord had intended, in the salient words of this discourse, simply to describe this state of heart towards Himself, and its blessedness, He would most

[1] "The participation of His flesh and blood must designate more than merely spiritual operations of Christ upon believers. The entire discourse relates to His glorified corporeality, the reality of which, St. John, according to his main design, was compelled to defend against gnosticising Doceticism, just as now it has become needful to maintain it in opposition to idealistic gnosis."—Olshausen *in loco.*

certainly never have supplemented the words "I am the living bread which came down from heaven," with the words "The bread which I will give is My flesh." For all ideas of loving faith feeding on the person beloved belong to the *whole person* of Christ, not specifically to His *flesh*.

Again, the atonement He wrought was not merely the fruit of the sufferings of His flesh or body, but of the sufferings of His soul also. If by eating His flesh Christ meant adoringly contemplating, or inwardly realizing His sufferings, then we surely must adoringly contemplate, not His flesh merely, which is the lower part of His lower nature, but rather the higher and deeper sufferings of that soul of which His flesh was but the clothing.

So that on any mere rationalistic or Zuinglian view, our Lord never would have *first* said, "I am the bread of life," thereby directing our faith to His whole person, and then have proceeded to narrow the eating of Himself as the bread of life to the eating of His flesh.

From all this we cannot but gather that this eating of His flesh must be something beyond, and to be distinguished from, the mental or inward realization of Christ's atonement, or our part in it.

It must consist in the reception of some great grace or benefit attached to His flesh as such, and to be received by us through the *eating of His flesh*—in some heavenly and spiritual way of course, but still through the *eating of His flesh*.

We now return to the narrative.

The Jews strove among themselves and asked, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?"

Our Lord vouchsafes no answer to this question, but He surely would have replied to it if, by "eating His flesh,"

He meant so simple a matter as realizing any doctrine which He would teach.[1]

On the contrary, He adds to the difficulty of all that He had previously said by introducing another material expression, viz. *the drinking of His blood*—"Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, *and drink His blood*, ye have no life in you."

This coupling of "drinking His blood," with "eating His flesh," more than doubles the probability that our Lord refers to some wondrous gift which the Eucharist was to be the authorized means of communicating to the believer; for, as we have already stated, a little more than a year after saying this, He instituted the Eucharist in two kinds, in His blood as well as in His body; for He said, "Drink ye all of this, for this is My blood."

In the next four verses our Lord describes the effects of this "eating of His flesh and drinking of His blood."

First, that through it He confers eternal life on the whole man, on the body as well as on the soul, for He says, "Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

Then, that through it Christ dwells in the Christian, and the Christian in Christ—"He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood dwelleth in Me and I in him." By this our Saviour connects the truth of eating His flesh and drinking His blood with that mass of remarkable

[1] "He [Jesus] lets them go without saying, 'I mean a merely spiritual communication,' which would have presented no difficulty to the minds of any one present. Hence a true exposition—one that gives the sentiments of the writing under consideration—must, even if the views of the expositor are entirely different, confess that the discourse undoubtedly here relates to a participation of the corporeality of Christ."—Olshausen on verses 54—59. Translated in Clark's "Foreign Theological Library."

doctrine in this Gospel, and in the Epistles, which teaches that Christians are in some mystical sense IN Christ.

It is worthy of remark, that the similitude of the "vine and the branches" presents the first instance of this mode of speaking. In it Christ, for the first time, speaks to the Apostles as IN Him, and bids them *abide* in Him. Now this similitude, or parable, was uttered by Christ immediately after he had administered His Supper to the disciples. Their union with him having been sealed therein, He naturally speaks to them (and for the first time) as "*in* Him."

The mystical indwelling which is here ascribed to the eating of Christ's flesh, stamps the whole matter as depending for its saving efficacy upon the spiritual state of him who eats.

No intelligent Christian has ever maintained that by any eating or drinking in impenitency or unbelief Christ would dwell in a man, and cause that man to dwell in Him.

The discourse closes with a reiteration that the bread came down from heaven, and that a man must eat not after the manner of their fathers if he would live for ever.

The narrative proceeds—"Many of His disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying, who can hear it?" Jesus, instead of making this hard saying plain, proceeds to add to it something still harder for unbelief to apprehend—"Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before?" "If you rise no higher in your conceptions, how will you be offended when you see Me, the bread of life, ascend up out of your reach into heaven?"

"It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth

nothing; the words that I speak unto you they are spirit and they are life."

These words are sometimes interpreted as if our Lord meant by them to retract or explain away all that He had said respecting the life-giving nature of His flesh.

Those who explain this discourse as if there was no reference throughout it to any Eucharistic blessing, insinuate that our Lord means by these words to say—"I have spoken to you about flesh, but by flesh I do not mean 'flesh' at all. I mean its very opposite. I mean spirit, and by 'spirit' I do not mean My spirit, but I mean My words—I mean, in fact, the Bible."

The answer to this wretched perversion is, of course, to ask with Luther (and he got the question from St. Augustine), Does the flesh of Christ profit nothing? Now, in no sense does the flesh even of Christ profit without the Spirit, or without the word. But then, who would separate the flesh either from the Spirit or from the word? The Catholic Church has never done so. In the earliest Liturgies extant—some of them in their substance traceable to Apostolic times—we have an invocation of the Holy Spirit upon both worshippers and elements, and I shall show that our branch of the Church would have her children realize and receive with a living faith every "word" of the Redeemer, or His apostles, which bears upon eating His flesh and drinking His blood.

Into the exact meaning of these words I cannot now enter. I shall content myself with taking for the present the most Evangelical and Protestant view of them which can be suggested.

Let us suppose that by the Spirit here our Saviour means the Holy Spirit, and that by quickening is meant illuminating and sanctifying the soul; and that Christ means by these words to teach His Church the obvious

truth, that "the bare participation of ordinances, unless the Spirit of God work with them, and quicken the soul by them, profits nothing."[1]

Now, so far from militating against the Church of England doctrine, that if with a true penitent heart and lively faith we receive the Holy Communion, we then and there receive the benefits attached by Christ in this discourse to the eating of His body and drinking of His blood, this interpretation does not even militate against Transubstantiation; for I never heard of any Roman Catholic writer who has asserted that the partaking of the consecrated host, *i. e.* of what he (the Roman Catholic) holds to be the natural flesh of Christ, will of itself, without the Spirit of God, benefit an impenitent man. No Papist ever held that the taking of this Sacrament turns an impenitent man into a penitent one, or a wilful sinner into a true saint.

So that it appears to me that these words of Christ, as they are commonly understood, cannot be safely cited against the grossest view possible of the presence of Christ's body and blood.

If any persons believed that we could be profited by the flesh of Christ without His Spirit, or that His dead flesh, carnally eaten by a carnal wicked man, would save that man, then these words, in their popular acceptation, would set such persons right.

Calvin's remarks upon these words are sufficiently near the truth, and may be useful for those on whose account I chiefly write:—

"Augustine (he says) thinks that we ought to supply the word 'only,' or 'by itself,' as if it had been said, 'The flesh alone, by

[1] Note in Matthew Henry.

itself profiteth nothing, because it must be accompanied by the Spirit.' This meaning accords well with the scope of the discourse, for Christ refers simply to the manner of eating; He does not therefore exclude every kind of usefulness, as if none could be obtained from his flesh, but He declares that if it be separated from the Spirit it will then be useless."

And so with the latter clause of the words of Christ in this verse: "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." A man must believe in, and accept, all the words of Christ respecting eating His flesh and drinking His blood—both the words which He spake in the synagogue of Capernaum, and the words which He spake when He instituted the Eucharist—if he is to "eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood" to life eternal.

The words to which Christ alludes are those which He had been speaking, and at which offence had been taken, and, of course, we cannot separate from them any sayings of His or of His Spirit which throw light upon them. If His words, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man," are spirit and life, so are His words, "This is my body," and so are the words of His Apostle, St. Paul, to whom He gave a special revelation respecting Holy Communion.

If these words are spirit and life, they cannot be mere figure and metaphor. If, too, they are spirit and life, they are only so to those who receive them in faith and submission.

Let those, then, who see no mystery of grace in these words fear exceedingly lest they destroy the faith of their brethren in sayings of Christ which seem, on the face of them, to demand great faith—deep submission of the whole soul to God's teaching: and I cannot but think that they are guilty of this who explain these words in a way which implies that words far less startling and obscure

would have been more suitable to the meaning which (in their opinion) Christ intended to convey.

Everything, then, in this discourse points to some gift of God to be given and received in the Supper or Sacrament which Christ shortly afterwards ordained.

They who deny this betray their secret consciousness that our Lord, throughout this discourse, alludes to a gift which cannot ordinarily be separated from the Sacrament of His Body and Blood.

They do so by systematically refraining from the use of the remarkable expressions with which this discourse is characterized.

These expressions are the most noteworthy and startling of any in the whole range of Scripture. If words have any meaning, they betoken the most intimate union with Christ possible. There is nothing elsewhere in Scripture which can be put in comparison with "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me and I in him."

Now, they who have seen a sacramental reference in the terms, "eating the flesh of the Son of Man, and drinking His blood," have freely used such terms when they have spoken of the dear and intimate relations subsisting betwixt Christ and the Christian.

And they who have seen no reference to Holy Communion in these words, but have explained them as merely expressing the inward realization of the atonement, have, as a rule (when speaking of the union of the Christian with Christ), studiously avoided the use of these remarkable terms, and have substituted for them others containing no such depth of meaning, nor anything so suggestive of close union.

Christians, like the Fathers, whose theology leads them to consider Holy Communion as the means of partaking

in the flesh and blood of Christ, freely and naturally make use of the expressions found in this discourse of Christ, as if they had sure grounds for their application.

Christians, on the contrary, who evince the most undoubted love to their Redeemer, but whose prejudices have led them to ignore any sacramental reference in this discourse, have avoided the use of such terms as "eating Christ's flesh, and drinking His blood," and have rather dwelt on other aspects of the soul's union with its Beloved, as, for instance, that Christ is the Christian's garment, or robe, or crown, or shepherd.

SECTION V.

THE MYSTERY.

We have now carefully examined all the Scriptures which teach any doctrine respecting Holy Communion.

Let us put together, in few words, the results of our investigation.

Our Lord, in His discourse at Capernaum, leads those who believe in Him to believe in Him, not only as the Son of God, or as the one Sacrifice for sin, but as the "*bread from heaven.*"

It is manifest that, if He is "Bread," then as "Bread" we must, in some sense, partake of Him; and so He says, "He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me."

He then further tells us, that "the bread which He gives is His *flesh*"—not His whole Person, but His *flesh*—and He further tells us, that we are to eat His flesh and to drink His blood to have His life in us.

Shortly afterwards, this same Jesus joins eating His body and drinking His blood with the partaking of certain

bread and wine, which He ordained to be used in a very solemn rite or ordinance, which He instituted on the eve of the redemption of the world by the giving of His body to death, and by the shedding of His blood.

After this, He gives, directly from Himself, a further and final revelation respecting this Holy Communion, to His last-chosen Apostle; in obedience to which final revelation, St. Paul speaks of the bread and cup as the communion or participation of Christ's body and blood, and bids men examine themselves before they eat and drink, lest, "not discerning the Lord's body, they become guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."

From all this, it is clear that Christ would have us receive certain great benefits of His redemption, through the eating of what He calls His body, and the drinking of what He calls His blood.

These terms are never qualified, nor is any explanation of them vouchsafed.

If we are to abide by Scripture, then, no matter what the mystery involved in the use of such terms as "eating the flesh" or "body" of Christ, and "drinking His blood," —no matter what the difficulty in apprehending that the highest blessings are made over to us through the reception of this body and blood—no matter, too, what the danger on the side of carnality and superstition, arising from the use of these terms, still the expressions "eating Christ's body" or "flesh," and "drinking His blood," are the only fitting terms to indicate the channel through which we receive certain extraordinary benefits, and so are the nearest to that truth and reality which God only can see as it is.

If we virtually set these terms aside, out of fear lest they be perverted or misunderstood, or if we so explain them away that it would clearly have been more feasible

for our Lord to have used (or for us to subtitute) more spiritual modes of expression in their place, then we commit the daring sin of presuming to be more spiritual than Christ Himself.

For we cannot conceal from ourselves the fact, and we must steadily look it in the face, that Christ, if it had been His blessed will, might, in this matter of the Holy Communion, have expressed Himself more spiritually than He has actually.

When Christ uses the word "flesh," He, of set purpose, employs a term which expresses a grosser and more corporeal thing than the word "spirit."

When Christ speaks of "eating the flesh of the Son of Man" and "drinking His blood," He deliberately uses expressions of a more material or less spiritual signification than if He had spoken of "partaking of His mind," or "spirit," or "realizing His Atonement."

When He instituted His Communion in the elements of bread and wine, He necessarily, and of course designedly, instituted it in things which pertain to the lower world of matter and sense, rather than the higher world of mind or intellect.

When St. Paul says, "We, being many, are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread," he evidently intends to say a thing very different from "We, being many, are one mind and one soul, for we are all partakers of one Spirit."

Both the Master and the servant deliberately use words associated with man's lower and fleshly nature, when they might have used words associated with man's higher and spiritual nature. And, if they do so, we must see to it that we fall into their mind.

We must not assume to be more spiritual than Christ, or than that Holy Spirit who spake by St. Paul; or,

whilst professing to avoid superstition, we may fall into the more spiritual, and, therefore, more diabolical, sins of intellectual pride and presumption.

However strongly we assert (and we assuredly must assert) that this eating is to be a spiritual eating, still it is clearly absurd for creatures so profoundly ignorant as we are of what constitutes either mind or matter, flesh or spirit, life or death, to insist upon virtually substituting "spirit" for "flesh," and to say, in effect, that Christ, by the words "eating flesh," means only, in fact, "partaking of spirit."

We have now arrived at a point from which we can see somewhat of the nature of the mystery involved in these terms which Christ uses, and from which we can somewhat realize its dimensions, and be certified that, as long as we are in this world, its solution must be out of our reach.

So that our only safe way is to adhere implicitly to the terms used in Scripture, without attempting to explain these hard sayings, but leave them, where Christ has left them, in impenetrable obscurity.

In His discourse in Capernaum, Christ offers to us certain unspeakably great benefits, not through partaking of His Spirit alone, but through "eating His flesh, and drinking His blood."

Of course, we cannot hope for any spiritual benefits from His hands without we have His Spirit, or apart from His Spirit; but in these places He mentions particularly, and with extraordinary emphasis, not His Spirit, but "His flesh and blood."

Now what is the flesh and blood of Christ? Evidently, that part of His whole adorable Person which He has in common with us men, and with us only.

He has the Godhead in all its fulness, in common with the Father and the Holy Ghost.

He has a spiritual nature in common with all purely spiritual beings, such as the angels. He has flesh and blood in common with man, and with man only.

The flesh and blood of the Redeemer is that part of His nature, and that only, which is exclusively human.

"Inasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same;" and, to do this, He "passed by the nature of angels, but He took on Him the nature of the seed of Abraham."

It is the will of God, then, that we should partake of certain amazing benefits, through direct and particular communion with that part of His Son's nature which is strictly human—that part alone which He has in common with us.

Herein is the mystery of this Sacrament. In it we have offered to us the greatest benefits of redemption; and these benefits become ours, not merely through religious intercourse with the Deity of Christ by prayer—not merely through such communion with the Spirit of Christ as consists in having within us a spirit whose will is conformed to His will, or in having a spirit made like to His in goodness and truth—but through a something over and above these blessed things—through the communication or partaking of His lower nature, His flesh and blood.

A moment's consideration of all this must convince us that this partaking must be unutterable and inexplicable.

In the following extracts, we have the confession of two of the highest intellects of these latter days, as to their inability to fathom, much less express in words, the Sacramental mystery.

"If we doubt what those admirable words may import, let him be our teacher for the meaning of Christ, to whom Christ was Himself a schoolmaster; let our Lord's Apostle be His interpreter; content we ourselves with his explication — My Body, the *com-*

munion of My Body, My Blood, the communion of My Blood. Is there anything more expedite, clear, and easy, than that as Christ is termed our life, because through Him we obtain life, so the parts of this Sacrament are His body and blood, for that they are so to us who, receiving them, receive THAT by them which they are termed? The bread and cup are His body and blood, because they are causes instrumental upon the receipt whereof the *participation* of His body and blood ensueth. For that which produceth any certain effect is not vainly nor improperly said to be that very effect whereunto it tendeth. Every cause is in the effect which groweth from it. Our souls and bodies quickened to eternal life are effects, the cause whereof is the Person of Christ, His body and blood are the true well-spring out of which this life floweth. So that His body and blood are in that very subject whereunto they minister life, not only by effect or operation, even as the influence of the heavens is in plants, beasts, men, and in everything which they quicken, *but also by a far more Divine and mystical* kind of union, which maketh us one with Him, even as He and the Father are one."—Hooker, Eccles. Pol. Book V. ch. lxvii. sec. 5.

"Our participation of Christ in this Sacrament dependeth on the co-operation of His omnipotent power which maketh it His body and blood to us, whether with change or without alteration of the element, such as they imagine, we need not greatly to care or inquire."—Ibid. sec. 6.

"Where God Himself doth speak those things which either for height and sublimity of matter, or else for secrecy of performance, we are not able to reach unto, as we may be ignorant without danger, so it can be no disgrace to confess we are ignorant. Such as love piety will as much as in them lieth know all things that God commandeth, but especially the duties of service which they owe to God. As for His dark and hidden works, they prefer, as becometh them, in such cases simplicity of faith before that knowledge which curiously sifting what it should adore, and disputing too boldly of that which the wit of man cannot search, chilleth for the most part all warmth of zeal, and bringeth soundness of belief many times into great hazard. Let it therefore be sufficient for me, presenting myself at the Lord's table, to know what there I receive from Him, without searching or inquiring of the manner how Christ performeth His promise . . . what these elements are in themselves it skilleth not, it is enough that to me which take them they are the body and blood of Christ, His promise in witness hereof suf-

ficeth, His word He knoweth which way to accomplish, why should any cogitation possess the mind of a faithful communicant but this, O my God, Thou art true; O my soul, thou art happy."—Ibid. sec. 12.

"I am not satisfied with the view of those who, while acknowledging that we have some kind of communion with Christ, only make us partakers of the Spirit, omitting all mention of flesh and blood. As if it were said to no purpose at all, that His flesh is meat indeed, and His blood is drink indeed; that we have no life except we eat that flesh and drink that blood, and so forth. Therefore if it is evident that full communion with Christ goes beyond their description, which is too confined, I will attempt briefly to show how far it extends. . . . If, indeed, it be lawful to put this great mystery into words, a mystery which I feel, and therefore freely confess that I am unable to comprehend with my mind, so far am I from wishing any one to measure its sublimity by my feeble capacity. Nay, I rather exhort my readers not to confine their apprehension within those too narrow limits, but to attempt to rise much higher than I can guide them. For whenever this subject is considered, after I have done my utmost, I feel that I have spoken far beneath its dignity. And though the mind is more powerful in thought than the tongue in expression, it too is overcome and overwhelmed with the magnitude of the subject. All then that remains is to break forth in admiration of the mystery, which it is plain that the mind is inadequate to comprehend, or the tongue to express."—Calvin's "Institutes," Book IV. chap. xvii. p. 395. (Calv. Soc. Translation.)

"Now should any one ask me as to the mode, I will not be ashamed to confess that it is too high a mystery either for my mind to comprehend or my words to express; and, to speak more plainly, I rather feel than understand it. The truth of God, therefore, in which I can safely rest, I here embrace without controversy. He declares that His flesh is the meat, his blood the drink of my soul; I give my soul to Him to be fed with such food. In His sacred supper He bids me take, eat, and drink His body and blood, under the symbols of bread and wine. I have no doubt that He will truly give and I receive. Only, I reject the absurdities which appear to be unworthy of the heavenly majesty of Christ, and are inconsistent with the reality of His human nature. Since they must also be repugnant to the word of God, which teaches both that Christ was received into the glory of the heavenly kingdom, so as

to be exalted above all the circumstances of the world (Luke xxiv. 26), and no less carefully ascribes to Him the properties belonging to a true human nature. This ought not to seem incredible or contradictory to reason (Iren. Lib. iv. cap. 34), because as the whole kingdom of Christ is spiritual, so whatever He does in His church is not to be tested with the wisdom of this world; or, to use the words of Augustine, 'this mystery is performed by man like the others, but in a divine manner, and on earth, but in a heavenly manner.' Such, I say, is the corporeal presence which the nature of the Sacrament requires, and which we say is here displayed in such power and efficacy, that it not only gives our minds undoubted assurance of eternal life, but also secures the immortality of our flesh, since it is now quickened by His immortal flesh, and in a manner shines in His immortality."—Ibid. Book IV. chap. xvii. sec. 32, p. 431.

SECTION VI.

THE COMMUNION SERVICE.

HAVING thus examined all the direct statements which we find in the New Testament respecting the nature and benefits of the Lord's Supper, we are able to ascertain what doctrine the Articles and formularies of any particular branch of the Church must assert, if they are to be accounted Scriptural.

First of all, if these confessions and formularies are to be accounted Scriptural, they must set forth the Holy Communion as primarily intended to make men partakers of the "body and blood of Christ." However they may protest against the natural eating of a natural body, they must not so explain away the terms "body" and "blood," as that other words such as "partaking of spirit," or "inwardly digesting doctrine," would evidently be nearer to the truth.

Secondly, the greatest benefits of redemption must be acknowledged to depend upon the right reception of this "body and blood."

Thirdly, these formularies must distinctly recognise that the *body* as well as the soul has its share in these benefits.

Fourthly, the utmost prominence must be given to the fact that the reception of these benefits depends upon the state of heart of him who receives the Communion.

Fifthly, the medium for the communication of these blessings must be set forth to be, not the elements of bread and wine generally, but the particular bread and wine consecrated after Christ's institution.

Sixthly, the whole service—viz., the consecration and administration of the elements, with the service of prayer and praise, in which it is embodied—must be accounted the most solemn memorial possible before God and men of the Sacrifice of the death of Christ, and so must of necessity be the most prominent act of worship in the Christian Church.

We will now consider these several points in their order.

First, then, if our formularies are to be Scriptural, the Holy Sacrament must be set forth in them as a means of grace intended by God to enable us to partake in some mystical but real way of the "body and blood of Christ."

In the twenty-eighth Article the Lord's Supper is defined to be "a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death,[1] inasmuch that to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break is

[1] Sacraments having been previously defined (Article XXV.) to be "certain *sure* witnesses and *effectual* signs of grace, and God's good will towards us, *by the which he doth work invisibly in us.*"

a partaking of the body of Christ, and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ.[1]

On the Sunday before the administration an invitation is given in which the Eucharist is described as "the most comfortable sacrament of the body and blood of Christ," and that "God hath given His Son our Saviour Jesus Christ not only to die for us, but also to be our spiritual food and sustenance in that Holy Sacrament . . . SO DIVINE and comfortable a thing to those who receive it worthily."

Then in the exhortation to the assembled communicants, those who intend to partake are addressed as those who "mind to come to the Holy Communion of the body and blood of Christ." In the prayer immediately preceding the consecration, we pray that "we may so eat the flesh of God's dear Son, and drink His blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His body," &c.

In the prayer of consecration the priest is directed to pray that "we receiving these God's creatures of bread and wine, according to His Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's Holy institution, in remembrance of His death and

[1] Let the reader particularly observe that this definition of Holy Communion was given advisedly, in the face of descriptions of it apparently more spiritual, which were then broached amongst the sects to which the Reformation gave rise. Such a more "spiritual" or rationalizing definition of it is mentioned in the beginning of the Article, "The Supper of the Lord is (not only) a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another."

We may marvel that the compilers of the Articles took the trouble to allude to an opinion on the face of it so ridiculously short of every Scripture which refers to the Lord's Supper, but their having done so is valuable in this respect, that it may serve to convince those who write and speak as if our Reformers were only half-enlightened, and had never had the "truth"! fully set before them, that they were quite aware of these so-called spiritual interpretations, and deliberately rejected them.

passion, may be partakers of His most blessed body and blood."

Then, in order actually to consecrate, the minister is directed to repeat the words of Christ—"This is my body which is given for you," whilst laying his hand upon the bread which he has just broken, and similarly with the cup.

Moreover, the bread is delivered to each communicant with the words—"The body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life."

And the cup is delivered to each communicant with the words—"The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ which was shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life."

After the reception thanks are given that God vouchsafes "to feed those who have duly received these holy mysteries with the spiritual food of the most precious body and blood of His Son our Saviour Jesus Christ."

And, lastly, in the Catechism to be learned of every person before he be brought to be confirmed—*i.e.* before he is allowed to approach the Lord's table—the inward part or thing signified is said to be, "The body and blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper."

From all this it is clear that the Church of England in her formularies of faith and worship fully recognises Holy Communion under that aspect in which it is primarily presented to us in Holy Scripture—viz. as a means of grace, in the faithful use of which God makes us partakers of the "body and blood of Christ."

The words of Christ are reverently held to, and not explained away.

Secondly, we have stated that if our services are Scriptural, they must recognise that the greatest benefits of

redemption are offered to us in and through the communion of Christ's body and blood.

The first proof of this we find in the fact that the Church defines a sacrament to be a means of grace rather than a sign of profession (Art. XXV.). "Sacraments be certain sure witnesses and effectual (efficacia) signs of grace, and God's good-will towards us, by the which He doth work invisibly in us." In the invitation it is described as "so divine and comfortable a thing to those who receive it worthily."

In the exhortation to the communicants the benefits to be expected by the faithful who "eat of that bread and drink of that cup" are set forth in the words of our Lord in His discourse in the synagogue. For we are bid to remember that "the benefit is great if with a true penitent heart and lively faith we receive that Holy Sacrament, for then we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ and drink His blood, then we dwell in Christ and Christ in us (John vi. 56), we are one with Christ and Christ with us."

The service thus recognises in the most solemn and effectual manner possible that our Lord's discourse in John vi. refers to a gift of God to be expected and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper, inasmuch as it encourages us to look for the unspeakable blessings set forth in that discourse in the penitent and faithful reception of the consecrated bread and wine.

What we are thus led to *look* for, we are afterwards led to *pray* for in the words, "Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of Thy Son Jesus Christ, and to drink His blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His body, and our souls washed through His most precious blood, and *that we may evermore dwell in Him and He in us.*"

So that the Church of England rules that the discourse in John vi. refers to Holy Communion, for she bids us

prepare to receive, and pray that we may receive therein, the blessings set forth in those words of Christ.

We shall return to this hereafter.

Then, when the elements are delivered to each communicant it is with the words—"The body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul to everlasting life."

And in one of the post communion prayers another grace connected in Scripture with the bread is recognised, for we "heartily thank God that he vouchsafes to feed us who have duly received these Holy mysteries with the spiritual food of the most precious body and blood of His Son, and doth assure us thereby of His favour and goodness towards us; and that *we are very members incorporate in the mystical* BODY *of His Son.*" This association of Holy Communion with the mystical body of Christ is, of course, founded on the distinct assertion of the Apostle (1 Cor. x. 17), "We being many are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread."

In the third place, we have shown that our Lord distinctly connects the eating of His flesh and drinking of His blood with the resurrection of the body, when He says, "Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him at the last day;" and so in the faith of this the Church gives the elements with the words, "The body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee, preserve thy BODY and soul unto everlasting life," &c.

We also pray that our "sinful bodies may be made clean by Christ's body," as well as "our souls washed through His most precious blood."

Before leaving this part of the subject, I desire to direct attention to a fact by no means so well known as it ought to be. It is this, that the Scripture view

of this sacrament as the divinely appointed means whereby we partake of the body and blood of Christ, is far more distinct in the Reformed Communion office of the Church of England than in the unreformed service which it superseded.

The recognition of the Eucharist as the communion or participation of the body and blood of Christ is incomparably more prominent in the Prayer-book than in the Missal.

Indeed, the Holy Communion as a means of grace to the receiver is hardly recognised in the Canon of the Mass. It is faintly recognised, and that is all. Throughout that document, from beginning to end, Holy Communion appears almost exclusively as an act of sacrificial worship.

Nowhere throughout the Roman service are any such blessings held forth to the faithful communicant as we have held forth to us in the words of our exhortation, "As the benefit is great if with a true penitent heart and lively faith we receive that Holy Sacrament, for then we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ and drink His blood, then we dwell in Christ and Christ in us, we are one with Christ and Christ with us."

Nowhere throughout the whole Canon of the Mass are the words of our Lord in the synagogue at Capernaum ever alluded to as setting forth Eucharistic benefits.

Nowhere throughout the whole compass of the Romish service is any such a petition put up by or for the communicants, as that in our prayer, "Grant us, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of Thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink His blood . . . that we may evermore dwell in Him and He in us."

Nowhere throughout the Canon is it anywhere recognised that those who partake faithfully are assured thereby that they are "very members incorporate in the mystical body

of God's Son;" in other words, nowhere throughout the Mass are faithful communicants led to expect the specific blessing associated by St. Paul with the eating of the bread in his words, "We being many are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread."

If we adhere to our Lord's words, the benefits attendant on the reception of the body and blood of Christ must extend to the whole man, for our Lord connects the resurrection of the body with eating His flesh and drinking His blood when He says, "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." We have observed the distinct recognition of this in our own service.

The recognition of it in the Mass[1] is the faintest possible—"May it (*i.e.* the participation of Thy body) be to me a safeguard and remedy both of soul and body," and this is all; for in the words which the priest is directed to say when he receives the bread himself, and also when he gives it to others, there is no mention of the body of the recipient as there is in the corresponding part of our service; for he is directed to say, "May the body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my (or thy) *soul* to everlasting life."

We see, then, that the three highest benefits of redemption connected by our Lord Himself, or by His Apostle, with the partaking of His flesh (or body) and blood—viz. Christ dwelling in us and we in Him (John vi. 56), the eternal life of our very bodies (John vi. 54), and the assurance of our continued incorporation in Christ's mystical body (1 Cor. x. 17)—we see, I say, that these blessings are, in the Mass, neither prayed for as things to be expected in the faithful partaking of the Eucharist, nor are they even recognised as dependent upon "eating the flesh of the Son of Man and drinking His blood."

[1] I allude to that form of it now in use.

Fourthly, we have to show, that if our service for Holy Communion is to be accounted scriptural, it must distinctly set forth that the reception of the benefits offered in Holy Communion depends upon the state of the communicant's heart.

Here, however, at the outset of this examination we must consider that in the account of the original institution of the Eucharist nothing whatsoever is said respecting the amount of faith or knowledge needful. The Apostles, to whom our Lord Himself gave the elements, evidently exercised a very slight belief indeed, if any at all, in the sin-atoning nature of our Lord's sufferings and death. They could hardly believe that the redemption of the world depended upon our Lord's death, when they actually supposed that His death was a sign that He had failed to redeem Israel (Luke xxiv. 21). Neither did they believe in His resurrection (which we now account to be the seal of the efficacy of His sufferings), though they had been assured of the fact by those who had seen Him after He was risen. So that our Lord Himself when He instituted His Supper administered it to those who had the dimmest possible faith in His atoning work.

They undoubtedly believed that our Lord was the Son of God and the Messiah, but evidently without realizing the force of the terms which they applied to Him.

It is clear, then, that the faith of the Apostles in the atoning work of Christ is not to be taken as in any way indicating the measure of realizing faith which communicants must now exercise. But the fact that our Lord Himself gave the Communion to persons in so imperfect a state of faith and knowledge, does seem to me to bear very strongly on one point, which is, that we must leave all judgment respecting the internal state of heart to the conscience of each person who desires to com-

municate. No body, or sect, or Church has any warrant whatsoever for examining into the internal religious experience of any one before it will admit him to the Lord's Table. A man is on such matters to judge himself. The Church must plainly and distinctly set forth the state of heart both towards Christ and towards our fellow-Christians which is requisite, and then she must leave the matter to the man himself.

This our branch of the Church does in her formularies, for we have there two exhortations—one to be read when notice is given of the Communion, the other, an address to those assembled to receive.

In the first, those are invited who are "religiously and devoutly disposed." Then such are told that it is their "duty to render most humble and hearty thanks to God for that He hath given His Son Jesus Christ, not only to die for us, but also to be our spiritual food and sustenance in that Holy Sacrament;" and so they are exhorted in the mean season to "consider the dignity of that holy mystery, and the great peril of the unworthy receiving thereof."

Then the commandments of God are indicated as the test by which they are to ascertain whether their outward life corresponds with their inward convictions, and most wisely, when we remember how the religious world tacitly allows the breaking of such commandments as the ninth and tenth to be compatible with a state of illumination or conversion; and more especially is great stress laid upon the duty of forgiveness; and rightly so, when we consider our Lord's own words respecting "bringing our gifts to the altar."

Then, again, at the conclusion a "full trust in God's mercy and a quiet conscience" are laid down as *requisite*.

But there is a second exhortation, setting forth a still

deeper view of the blessings of redemption which are to be realized by those who would savingly partake of the body and blood of Christ.

In this, which begins with "Dearly beloved in the Lord, ye that mind to come," &c. the communicants are reminded how they must diligently try and examine themselves; and this, in the first place, because of the unspeakable greatness of the benefits offered in Holy Communion—benefits which, by their very nature, can only pertain to the faithful receiver; such as, that we "dwell in Christ and Christ in us," that we are "one with Christ and Christ with us."

They are then, in the very words of St. Paul, reminded of the dangers of unworthily receiving.

Accordingly, the assembled communicants are bid to judge themselves, that they be not judged of the Lord . . . to repent truly . . . to have a lively and steadfast faith in Christ our Saviour, to amend their lives, and to be in perfect charity with all men.

But above all, a grateful realizing faith is insisted on as beyond all else needful, in the words, "Above all things, ye must give most humble and hearty thanks to God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—for the redemption of the world by the death and passion of our Saviour Christ," &c.

There is also another short address to those who desire to communicate, in which they are spoken to as those who "truly and earnestly repent of their sins, and are in love and charity with their neighbours," &c.

After this, the more solemn part of the service begins (as it does in all the ancient Liturgies) with the words, "Lift up your hearts." There we are led to pray that we may so eat—*i. e.* with such faith, and such inward desire after the good things of God's salvation—that our sinful bodies

may be made clean by His body, and our souls washed, &c. And having communicated, we thank God that "He hath vouchsafed to feed us who have *duly* received these holy mysteries with the spiritual food of the most precious body and blood of His Son our Saviour Jesus Christ."

In the Catechism, "The body and blood of Christ are said to be verily and indeed taken and received *by the faithful* in the Lord's Supper."

And in Article XXVIII. "To such as rightly, worthily and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ."

In the fifth place, if our service is to be scriptural, the outward part of the Sacrament must be set forth to be, not bread and wine generally, but the particular bread and wine which has been consecrated after the Institution of Christ.

For no other bread and wine is spoken of in the Scriptures, in connexion with the Lord's Supper; and in every mention of the Eucharist, particular allusion is made to consecration, or blessing, or thanksgiving. In Holy Scripture the outward parts are never dissociated from the act of benediction, or Eucharistia, by which they have been set apart.

In all the four accounts of the Institution, our Lord's act of blessing or giving thanks is particularly mentioned. Thus, in St. Matthew, "As they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it." In St. Mark, "As they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake." In St. Luke, "He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it." In St. Paul, "I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He brake it." . . . "After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped."

St. Paul afterwards twice characterizes the sacramental elements as "this bread," "this cup" (1 Cor. xi. 26, 27): and when he has occasion to mention them in connexion with the inward part, it is as the bread and cup blessed or consecrated. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?"

Again, in the two places in the Acts of the Apostles in which Holy Communion is alluded to, it is called "The breaking of bread" (Acts ii. 42; xx. 7): by this expression the whole Eucharistic action being evidently meant—the "breaking" being always accompanied by the "blessing."

Observe how the Ordinance in these places takes its name from the outward visible act done by the minister, as distinguished from the act of reception or the realization of the thing signified. We do not read, "They continued steadfast in the "eating" of bread, but in the "breaking" of bread. The disciples came not together to *eat* bread, but to *break* bread.

St. Paul says not, "The cup of blessing which ye partake of, or which ye realize," but "The cup of blessing which we bless;" and this Scripture principle is strictly adhered to by the Church of England; for there is a rubric directing that, "when the priest, standing before the table, hath so ordered the bread and wine that he may with the more readiness and decency break the bread before the people, and take the cup into his hands, he shall say the Prayer of *Consecration*, as followeth."

Then comes the prayer containing, as all the ancient Liturgies do, an acknowledgment of God's mercies in having given Christ for our redemption; and then reciting the words of our Lord in the accounts of the Institution, taken, so far as regards the bread, from St. Paul's account, but combining the words as given by SS. Matthew and Luke in the blessing of the cup.

After this there is a further rubric, recognising still more emphatically the need of consecration. "*If* the consecrated bread and wine be all spent before all have communicated, the priest is to consecrate more according to the form before prescribed, beginning at 'Our Lord Jesus Christ,' &c."

This rubric was introduced at the last revision, and it renders the service more scriptural, *i.e.* more in accordance with every notice of the Holy Communion in Scripture, for the only bread and wine recognised in Scripture as the outward part of the Sacrament, is that which has been consecrated in accordance with the Institution of Christ.

SECTION VII.

THE EUCHARISTIC SACRIFICE.

In the sixth and last place, if our service is to be accounted scriptural, it must distinctly set forth the act of celebrating the Eucharist as the most solemn memorial or commemoration possible before God and man of the sacrifice of the death of Christ. It must be the chief Christian sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, and so the most prominent act of worship in the Christian Church.

The commemorative or sacrificial character of the Eucharist rests on the words of our Lord, "Do this in remembrance of me," and on those of St. Paul, "As oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come."

We should naturally suppose that those who loved the Saviour, and received His every word as the word of the Living God, would have looked upon this memorial of

Him, instituted by Himself on the eve of His passion, as the great commemorative action of the Church when gathered together; and so we find that they did.

This solemn commemorative rite formed the distinctive feature of Christian, as distinguished from Jewish or heathen worship.

There are very few references throughout the New Testament to stated Christian assemblies (not more, I think, than six). And in three, or probably four, of these, Holy Communion is expressly mentioned as the object for which such assemblies were gathered together.

Of course, I should exclude from the above enumeration the notices of the meeting of the Jewish Christians of Jerusalem and its neighbourhood in the temple, because attendance in such a place as the Jewish temple of sacrifice cannot form any precedent for after ages. I should also exclude all notices of preaching and teaching in the Jewish synagogues for the same reason. Having now to do only with purely Christian congregations for worship or instruction, I repeat, that the grand object for which such were gathered together was the celebration of the Eucharist.

Thus it is said in Acts xx. 7, that the specific object of the gathering together of the disciples on the first day of the week was "the breaking of bread." On that occasion St. Paul preached to them, but the purpose for which the assembly came together is expressly stated to have been the celebration of the Eucharist.

Again, the notice of the Lord's Supper in the eleventh chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians would lead us to suppose that the early Church gathered themselves together chiefly, if not mainly, for it: and the "giving of thanks" mentioned in the notice of Christian worship in 1 Cor. xiv. 16, is evidently the Eucharistic consecration prayer or blessing.

Again, the partaking of the Lord's Table is alluded to in 1 Cor. xi. 16—21, in evident contrast to the partaking of the Jewish or heathen sacrifices, which of course were the leading features in Jewish and heathen worship.

In two other places only are distinctive Christian assemblies referred to; namely, in Hebrews x. 25, and James ii. 1, 2: but in neither of these do we find one word respecting the nature of such assemblies. I do not for a moment mean to assert that Christians never met together except for Eucharistic purposes; but I do assert that we have no record of any *stated* meetings except for this purpose. We have no account, for instance, of any *stated* meetings for prayer, or preaching, or reading of Scriptures *only*.

It will be needful now, at this stage of our inquiry into the position of the Eucharist as the great characteristic act of Christian worship, to investigate, as far as our limits will permit, the exact sense in which the Holy Eucharist is a "sacrifice."

The Sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist most assuredly does not seem prominent in the Scriptures which teach us the nature of this Sacrament. It appears in them rather as an ordinance in which God *offers* something to us, than one in which we *offer* anything to Him.

Taking, also, into account the idea almost always attached to the English word "sacrifice," there is a difficulty amongst us in applying it to the Eucharist; for, in most cases, we mean by a sacrifice, a thing voluntarily surrendered, or given up, which costs the sacrificer something. Thus, in common conversation, we speak of a man making great sacrifices for his religion, or country, or friends. This idea we derive from the accounts of sacrifices in the Old Testament, which were, for the most part, costly:

the most prominent sacrifices being those of bullocks, calves, and lambs, in which mainly consisted the property of the men of those days. When these things were sacrificed, they were slaughtered, and afterwards partially or wholly consumed by fire, and were of no further value to the sacrificer.

Besides these, there were other sacrifices, which were mostly taken away altogether from the offerer. Some of them are described particularly in Leviticus ii.; and these, being offerings of fine flour, or cakes, were not (compared with the others) costly; but they also were partially or wholly consumed by fire, and, when once offered, ceased to belong to the person who provided them, nor were they partaken of at all by him; but, part of them having been burnt, the remainder was to be eaten by Aaron and his sons.

Then there was the offering of incense, which was a very costly compound, and was wholly consumed by fire, on the altar appropriated to this kind of sacrifice.

Now, the Holy Eucharist presents none of these features of sacrifice. I mean, of course, the actual Eucharist, divested of all its accessories; for, in this investigation, we must be most careful to distinguish the offering of our substance in the offertory, and the sacrifices of prayer and adoration which have always accompanied the celebration of the Eucharist, from what actually constitutes the Eucharist itself.

The actual Eucharist is the consecration and consumption, as food, of a small quantity of bread and wine.

It is clear that such a rite cannot present those features which we usually associate with the idea of a sacrifice. No part of it is consumed by fire. No part of it belongs to the priest as his peculiar portion—the whole costs little or nothing. Each communicant, whether priest or layman,

receives the same; and all that is consecrated is consumed by the worshippers.

Another point, too, a very little consideration will make abundantly clear; which is, that the comparison we have drawn between the Lord's Supper and the ancient sacrifices is little, if at all, affected by the light in which we regard the elements after consecration.

For, supposing that we regard the elements as transubstantiated into the natural flesh and blood of Christ, even that would not constitute the Eucharist a sacrifice in the sense of the Levitical sacrifices. For, even then, we should offer that which would cost us nothing; for, whatever sacrifice there would be in the Eucharist, it would involve no cost or self-denial on our part, and so it would, in a very material point, differ from the Jewish sacrifices.

No matter what the elements become by consecration, no part of them is destroyed, as was the case in the corresponding Jewish offering of fine flour.

The sacrifice, in whatever it consists, does not involve that total or partial removal from the earth (as by fire) of the thing sacrificed, which formed the chief feature in the sacrifices of oxen, flour, or incense.

Again: it is very distinctly laid down in a great number of places in the Old Testament, that the burnt-offerings, and some other sacrifices, were propitiatory. Now, without looking narrowly into the purpose and extent of this propitiation, it is evident that the propitiatory character of the sacrifices was intimately associated with the fact, that they were costly to the offerer, and that they involved the death of the victim at the time when it was offered. All the imperfect and typical propitiation which they afforded was connected with the death or destruction of the thing sacrificed.

Now, in this way the Eucharist cannot be a propitiatory sacrifice. If we take the grossest possible view of the presence of Christ's body and blood, we cannot suppose for a moment that in the Eucharist that Body actually suffers over again pain and death. No matter how complete the identification of the elements with the body and blood of Christ, it is not to be supposed that Christ suffers crucifixion afresh whilst they are consecrated, or broken, or consumed. And yet it was the death of the animal offered which gave to the sacrifice its limited typical propitiatory value; just as it was the pains and death suffered by the body of Christ, and the separation of the blood from that body by death, which constituted His body the one real propitiatory sacrifice.

The Holy Eucharist, then, has scarcely one feature in common with the things which in Scripture are called, and which English Christians commonly call, sacrifices.

The things offered in the Sacrament cost the offerer nothing. There is neither pain nor death suffered at the time by the thing offered. It is not wholly consumed or destroyed, in such a sense as to be lost to the offerer; nor is it partially destroyed, and the remainder consumed by the priests alone, as in the Levitical offering most resembling it in outward form.

Yet, notwithstanding all this, the Holy Communion possesses the most intense sacrificial reality. No sacrifice that ever was presented before God, in solemn worship of Jew or Gentile, can come near it. No God-ordained offering of the old Law can, in the matter of sacrificial virtue or significance, be named beside it in regard of the one all-important element of ancient sacrificial worship, viz. direct reference to, and close connexion with, the One all-atoning Victim.

For the *real* spiritual value of the old sacrifices lay not

in the costliness of the victim, nor in its death and the outpouring of its blood, nor in its consumption by fire; but it lay in the implied reference to the atoning death of Christ which pervaded the whole transaction.

In the ages preceding the sacrifice of the death of Christ, there was nothing which had anything like the close reference to it, or anything like the close connexion with it, which the Eucharist has—and that, too, by the express appointment and institution of Christ Himself.

Respecting the flesh of no victim ever offered in old times were such words said as "This is my body which is given for you." Respecting the blood of no victim was it ever said, "This is MY blood of the New Covenant which is shed for you." Previous to the Eucharist, no memorial of Himself was ever instituted by "God manifest in the flesh."

So that, having regard to that one thing which gave the old offerings their spiritual value (viz. their reference to the death of Christ), all the burnt-offerings and sacrifices which all the priests of Aaron's line ever offered, are, in the eye of faith, as nothing when set side by side with one celebration of the Eucharist.

The sacrificial character of the Eucharist depends on the words of our Lord, "Do this in remembrance of me," and on the words of the Holy Spirit by St. Paul, "As oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come."

Let us consider what these words must be taken to mean.

"Do this in remembrance of me," must signify either "Do this as a solemn public or Church commemoration of my death," or, "Do this as a means of reminding yourselves individually of what you owe to my death."

According to the first, our Lord instituted a solemn

commemoration of Himself to be performed, before God and man, by the whole Church gathered together in its stated assemblies.

According to the second, He ordained, in fact, nothing more than an acted sermon—a mere means of publicly instructing or edifying individuals, who, by the use of certain types, were severally to remind themselves of His death on their own private account.

The first of these views seems to me remarkably well expressed in the following passage :—

"By commanding His Church to do this in remembrance of Him, He bids her, in truth, do that continually which He did in the upper room, and which He Himself is ever doing in heaven. We believe that He is continually interceding for us at the right hand of the Father—presenting night and day before the mercy-seat His glorified body, with all its wounds, and thereby reminding the Father of the one oblation of Himself, once for all offered upon the cross; and in the Holy Eucharist, the Church on earth joins in the memorial which He is making, and pleads together with Him the unspeakable merits of His death and passion." (Young's "Daily Readings," vol. i. p. 438, for Fourth Sunday in Lent.)

The second of these views is well expressed in the words of a man who has more than any other man stamped his own character on the modern Evangelical party in the Church of England : "It is also here added, that as oft as they drank of that cup, they ought to do it in remembrance of Christ; in order that the frequent recollection of His love, His sufferings, and their obligations to Him, might have a proper effect upon their heart and lives." (Thomas Scott's Commentary on 1 Cor. xi. 25.)

A very little consideration will show that anything like

this latter gloss cannot be taken as coming up to the meaning of the words, "Do this in remembrance of me;" for there are many things which, far more directly than the Eucharist, answer the purpose of *thus* reminding us of Christ's death. The ordinance of preaching far more directly proclaims Christ crucified as the sinner's only hope. The reading of those Scriptures in which we have the account of His crucifixion is far better calculated than the breaking of a morsel of bread to impress upon us how His love was stronger than death; for in them we have simply but vividly set forth the extremity of His sufferings, in His agony, and in His endurance of desertion, shame, and contempt. The simple reading of Isaiah liii. would far more lucidly set forth the atoning, reconciling virtue of His Passion.

All this has been felt and practically acknowledged by the various sects which have denied, or lost sight of, the true sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist; and so amongst them, as I am prepared to show, the Eucharist has degenerated into a means of proclaiming or showing forth, not the death of Christ, but the faith of particular persons in the fact that Christ died for them, and that they have been enabled to exercise an act of self-appropriating faith in Him.

According to them, our Lord should have said, not "Do this in remembrance of me," but "Do this to show your faith in me."[1]

[1] Such is apparently the only view taken of the Eucharist by the Independents or Congregationalists. "They believe in the perpetual obligation of Baptism and the Lord's Supper: the former to be administered to all converts to Christianity and their children, by the application of water to the subject in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; *and the latter to be celebrated by Christian Churches as a token of faith in the Saviour and of brotherly love.*" One can scarcely imagine a view of Holy

A more mistaken gloss on any Scripture was never put forth; for the evidence of faith, according to God's Word, is not the reception of Sacraments, but holiness of life. The sole view of the nature and object of the Lord's Supper, entertained by tens of thousands of religious Englishmen and Englishwomen, is that of an ordinance, in which they are enabled individually to make a profession of their spiritual hold on Christ. In a very large portion of the popular religious literature of the day, the name usually given to communicants is "professors"!!

In opposition to all this, we have to maintain the true obvious meaning of Christ's words, "Do this in remembrance of ME." "Do this as a solemn commemoration before God and your brethren of what I have done and suffered for you."

And the true meaning of the words of the Spirit by St. Paul, "Ye do show the Lord's death till He come." "Ye do show forth before God and the elect angels, and the Church, not your miserable faith, but the love unspeakable; the love stronger than death and hell; the love that passeth knowledge, of the Son of the Most High God."

When we "do this," then we commemorate and show forth before God the Father, and before the Church, the Sacrifice of the death of Christ.

We commemorate it, or show it forth, in solemnly and religiously partaking of certain things, which (if we receive Christ's own words as true) we must believe to have the closest relation to that Body and Blood by which

Communion which more completely excludes the teaching of every passage of God's word in which this sacrament is referred to. The above extract is taken from "The Constitution of the Congregational Union of England and Wales," as given in the Congregational Year Book for 1864.

He redeemed the world; so that the representation of the death of Christ by the flesh of the slain bullock or lamb, was as nothing in the eye of God to the representation of the death of Christ by the Eucharistic elements. When then we celebrate the Communion, we do in remembrance of Christ an infinitely greater thing than the Jews did by their sacrifices, for we show forth Christ's death by the use of outward parts or signs, which Christ Himself calls by the names of the things which they signify, and by no other names.

It is clear that if the Church believes in the reality of her Lord's own words in instituting this ordinance, she must believe in its superior acceptableness, above all the typical ordinances which went before it.

Believing this, she cannot but consider the time of celebrating the Holy Communion as the most sacred season of her worship, and so she will naturally choose it as the most fitting opportunity for bringing before God her lowliest confessions, her deepest desires, her highest praises, her most grateful thanksgivings. She will humbly offer these at such a time, with the view of connecting them as closely as she possibly can with the atoning sacrifice of her Great Mediator. Just as the pious Jew, who entered most deeply into the spiritual and evangelical signification of his burnt offerings, would naturally present along with them his heartiest prayers and praises.

This, then, is the sacrificial view of the Eucharist. It is the solemn ecclesiastical memorial of the Sacrifice of the death of Christ. It is the Saviour's own ordained means of showing forth before God, men, and angels, His love in His death. Just as the Old Law sacrifices were anticipatory showings forth of the one atoning death which was to be, so this Communion is a memorial, or

commemorative showing forth, of the one atoning death which has been.

All this accounts for the otherwise inexplicable fact—with the mention of which we commenced this part of our subject—that the "breaking of bread," or Eucharistic celebration, appears, in the few notices of Christian assemblies recorded in the New Testament, as the leading feature of those assemblies.

All this, too, is the only way of accounting for what would otherwise be an equally inexplicable fact, that the earliest records in ecclesiastical history concerning Christian assemblies, and the earliest draughts of Christian Liturgies, are in strict accordance with these Scripture allusions to the Eucharist, for both Ecclesiastical History and all early Liturgies set forth Holy Communion as the grand terminal act of all meetings of Christians for united worship.

Stated Christian assemblies do not appear either in Scripture or in ecclesiastical writers as prayer meetings, or meetings for mutual edification or instruction, by the reading or exposition of Scripture alone; they always appear as meetings for celebrating a worship of which the Eucharist was the grand termination. Prayers of astonishing fervour, supplications for every conceivable class of human sufferers, praises founded on the most exalted views of the Divine nature and attributes, all take their places round the "breaking of bread" as their centre; all lead the worshipper on to the culminating point, the reception by each individual present of the Eucharist.

The following notice of Christian assemblies by Justin Martyr is one of the earliest and, at the same time, the most circumstantial which exists, of what in those days (A.D. 140) constituted the Divine worship of Christians on the Lord's Day.

"Over all our offerings, we bless the Creator of all things, through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Spirit. And, on the day which is called Sunday, there is an assembly in one place of all who dwell either in towns or in the country, and the memoirs of the Apostles or the writings of the prophets are read as long as the time permits. Then, when the reader has finished, he who presides, admonishes and exhorts by word of mouth (δια λογου) to the imitation of their noble deeds. We then rise up altogether and put forth prayers, and, as we have already said, bread is brought, and wine and water, and the President in like manner offers up prayers and praises with all his power; and the people join in with one voice, saying the Amen, and those things over which the Eucharistic prayer has been said are distributed and received by each person, and are sent, through the Deacons, to the absent."—(Justin Martyr, Apol. i. 67.)

Such is the memorial, or commemoration, or sacrificial view of Holy Communion as it exists in the New Testament, and as it has obtained in the Church from New Testament times. We have now to consider how all this is represented in the Book of Common Prayer.

First of all, Holy Communion is, according to the theory of the Church as expressed in the construction and arrangement of the Book of Common Prayer, the great distinguishing act of Christian worship on the Lord's Day.[1]

For the Church, in having provided for every Sunday a different Collect, Epistle, and Gospel, as part of the Communion Service, has shown her mind upon the celebration of Holy Communion, on every Lord's Day at least.

[1] In saying this, I must not be taken to commit myself in any way to either side of the dispute respecting the daily or weekly Eucharistic celebration.

Each Sunday is known by the special differences in its Communion Service, for these constitute the leading, if not the only, distinction betwixt one Sunday and another. The Table of Old Testament lessons of course following the lead of the Collects, Epistles, and Gospels, whilst the remainder of the Service is in no way distinguished from that for week-days.

In addition to this, the very sermon itself comes in as part of the Communion Service, for the only recognition of a sermon in the whole Prayer-book is contained in a rubric in the middle of the Communion Service, after the Nicene Creed and before the Offertory.

All this shows indisputably that Holy Communion has now in *theory* the same place in the Church's Sunday worship as it had in primitive or New Testament times.

It is true that this has been to a lamentable extent only the *theory* of the Church; in practice it has not been carried out; but the Prayer-book is not to blame for this. Each minister, no matter how infrequent his actual administration of Holy Communion, is obliged to read a part, viz. the commencement, of the Communion Service before he preaches, thereby forcing the more thinking of his flock to ask, Why does he omit the rest? Why does he begin a separate and distinct service, and break off short in the middle of it?

Our usual practice of reading the beginning of the Holy Communion Service and not administering the Sacrament, is like "saying grace" when there is no food on the table. But the fault is our own, not the fault of the Church; for, in the Prayer-book, Holy Communion still occupies the same position which it did in New Testament or primitive times.

Then, in the next place, if the Church of England has the right view of Holy Communion—if she regards it as

the one grand memorial, or commemorative sacrifice of the New Testament—she will naturally choose the time of celebrating it as the time in which her children are to bring before God their deepest confessions of sin and highest acts of worship and praise. And so she does—for at the celebration of the Eucharist, under a deep sense of that awful nearness of the presence of God our Saviour, to which we approach, we bring before God our lowliest confessions of sin—we put up a confession of sin far deeper in its expressions of humiliation than that used in daily morning or evening prayer.

The prayer of humble access also ("We do not presume to come to this Thy table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness," &c.) can scarcely be surpassed in its expressions of a sense of utter unworthiness.

Then, at the time of Holy Communion, we bring before God our most earnest supplications and intercessions for all orders and degrees of men.

But, here it may be objected that the form of supplication in which we do this—the Prayer for the Church Militant—is much too succinct and meagre. It may be so, compared with the corresponding form in some of the ancient Eastern Liturgies;[1] but it should be remembered that the vast mass of our communicants partake of the Holy Sacrament after the Sunday morning service, *i. e.* after they have joined in the Litany, a form of supplication unsurpassed in its union of particularity of petition with conciseness, and of holy fervour with deep self-abasement and reverence.

At Holy Communion, too, we offer to God our most exalted praises and deepest thanksgivings.

Now, the highest acts of praise will ever be the simplest.

[1] The Prayer for the Church Militant, however, is far more full than any corresponding form in the Canon of the Mass.

The thing which mars our praises in these latter days, is the self-contemplation, which somehow, it seems, we cannot keep out of them.

But it is evident that the nearer we get to God the more complete will be the annihilation of self.

God has revealed to us the very words in which He is praised by the unfallen spirits who are nearest to His throne. And there is no taint of self about these praises. God is very near indeed to those who sing them, and their words are very few.

"Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory," so we read it in one vision. (Isa. vi. 3.) "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come;" thus we read it in another. (Rev. iv. 8.)

No praise can be simpler, and none can be higher.

And the Church Catholic has confidently adopted this anthem of the Seraphim.

Conscious that she comes nearest to God on earth in Holy Communion, she boldly claims to use in it the words of those whom in heaven He has set the nearest to Himself.

And with one consent she has done this. The draughts of ancient Liturgies used in Churches, debarred by sheer distance from all intercourse with one another—scattered over the earth from Gaul to Abyssinia, and from Spain to Malabar, all bear witness to the fact, that centuries before there was either Pope or Christian Emperor to compel or even to recommend to the whole Christian world uniformity in praise and thanksgiving, still, guided either by the direct inspiration of God's Spirit, or by agreement of the College of Apostles before their dispersion, every branch of Christ's Holy Church had presumed to offer to God in the most sacred service, the very same incense of praise

which He receives from those whom, of all created things, He has placed the nearest to Himself.

This act of praise in our Service-book is as follows:—

"With angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious name, evermore praising Thee, and saying, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of Thy glory. Glory be to Thee, O Lord Most High!'"

The reader will perceive that these words of highest adoration will more than bear comparison, for majesty and simplicity, with the corresponding act in any Liturgy, no matter how ancient or widely used.

To assist him in forming a due estimate of them, I give, in a note at the end of this section (page 187), this anthem, or hymn, as it exists in Liturgies used in all parts of the world, from the remotest times.

In addition to this, we offer up to God, at this most sacred time, the "Gloria in excelsis." This act of praise, also, is characterized by its extreme simplicity. It is, if I may so say, a more human act of praise than the Tersanctus or Seraphic Hymn. There are cries for mercy mingled with the strain of thanksgiving. It is also more particularly addressed to the Son of God, as the Lamb of God that taketh away sin.

The use of this hymn can be traced, according to Palmer, for more than fifteen hundred years in the Eastern Church; and the Church of England has used it, either at the beginning or end of the Liturgy, for above twelve hundred years.

No forms of praise can be higher than these; and none exist which have been sanctified like these, by the general use of the Catholic Church in her highest worship.

A question arising out of the preceding remarks now calls for some notice.

It may be asked, In what part of our Communion

Service do we make that solemn sacrificial memorial of the death of Christ, which the Church has ever esteemed it her highest privilege to put up to God?

It is well known that all the ancient Liturgies had a particular form of words, in which the celebrant made the oblation.

Thus, in the Clementine :—

"Wherefore having in remembrance His Passion, Death, and Resurrection from the dead, His return into heaven, and His future Second Appearance when he shall come with glory and power to judge the quick and the dead, and to render to every man according to his works; we offer to Thee, our King and our God, according to his institution, this bread and this cup, giving thanks to Thee through Him," &c.

The first Liturgy of Edward VI.'s reign had a form of oblation answering to this, in the words—

"Wherefore O Lord and heavenly Father, according to the Institution of thy dearly Beloved Son Our Saviour Jesus Christ, we thy humble servants do celebrate, and make here before thy Divine Majesty, with these thy Holy gifts, the memorial which thy Son hath willed us to make, having in remembrance His blessed Passion, mighty Resurrection, and glorious Ascension, rendering unto Thee most hearty thanks for the innumerable benefits procured unto us by the same, entirely desiring thy Fatherly Goodness mercifully to accept this our Sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving: most humbly beseeching Thee to grant that by the merits," &c.

The particular form of oblation with which this prayer begins is omitted in our present service, and I (with very many of my brethren) regret the omission.

We have, however, now to inquire, whether this omission vitiates that true sacrificial character of the Eucharist, which our reformers, as well as all our great divines, have acknowledged. I cannot think that, in the sight of God, it does; for, if we are to judge by the words of St. Paul, the special sacrificial act is the act of the whole Church,

and is intimately connected with the partaking. "As oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come."

From the words of Christ, "Do this in remembrance of Me," and from these words of St. Paul, we derive all our views of the sacrificial character of Holy Communion.

Now, the words, "Do this in remembrance of Me" certainly do not refer to one particular act of oblation in the service, but to the whole Eucharistic action — giving thanks, blessing, breaking, on the part of the minister; taking, and eating and drinking, on the part of the whole Church.

If we are to judge of it by these words of Christ and His Apostle, the sacrificial character of the Eucharist is not to be confined to any particular form of oblation, in words or acts, but is to be extended to the whole Eucharistic service, especially to the "partaking."

We do, or may, however, make a verbal act of oblation in the words, "We, thy humble servants, entirely desire Thy fatherly goodness mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, most humbly beseeching Thee to grant," &c.

The words, "sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving," (as any one who is in the least conversant with any Communion Service besides our own, well knows,) allude not to any act of praise in the service (such as the Tersanctus, for instance), but to the Eucharist itself, *i. e.* the blessing, breaking, giving, taking, and eating, as a memorial of Christ.

NOTE.—Let the reader remember, that the foregoing chapter is not a treatise on the Eucharist, but an attempt to show very briefly that the doctrine which we derive from

the notices of it in the New Testament is fully represented in the Prayer-book.

This must be my apology for not entering into several matters of great importance and interest, such, for instance, as the Jewish sacrifices considered as types of the Eucharist. The reader who desires to study this branch of the subject will find it exhausted in Mr. Freeman's book, "The Principles of Divine Service."

I here give some very ancient forms of the "Tersanctus," or "Hymn of the Seraphim," called by some the "Triumphal Hymn."

From the Liturgy of St. James, anciently used in the Church of Jerusalem:—

"It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty that we should praise and bless, worship, glorify, and give thanks to Thee, the Maker of all visible and invisible things; the Treasure of eternal happiness, the Fountain of life and immortality, the God and Governor of the universe: To whom the heavens sing praise and all their powers: The sun and moon, and the whole choir of stars: The earth and sea and all their inhabitants: Jerusalem the heavenly assembly and Church of the first-born that are written in heaven: The spirits of just men and prophets: The souls of Martyrs and Apostles, Angels, Archangels, Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, Authorities, and the tremendous Powers: The many-eyed Cherubim and the Seraphim with six wings, who with twain cover their faces, and with twain their feet, and with twain they fly, crying incessantly one to another, and with uninterrupted shouts of praise,

"*People.* 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth, Heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Hosanna in the Highest: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the Highest.'"

From the Liturgy used in the Church of Alexandria, ascribed to St. Mark:—

". . . The many-eyed Cherubim and Seraphim of six wings who with twain cover their faces, and with twain their feet, and with twain they fly, calling one to another, never ceasing from Divine

praises, singing, crying aloud and glorifying, lifting up their voices and saying to the majesty of thy glory the triumphal hymn, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Sabaoth, Heaven and earth are full of thy glory.'

"It is Thou indeed who dost make all Holy, but with all that glorify Thee accept our Holy Song which we sing together with them saying,

"*People.* 'Holy, Holy, Holy Lord.'"

From the Clementine, a Liturgy of the remotest antiquity:—

"The Cherubim and Seraphim with six wings . . . . crying incessantly, with uninterrupted shouts of joy: and let all the people say with them:—

"Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Sabaoth. Heaven and earth are full of His glory: Blessed be He for evermore."

From the Liturgy used in the Church of Ethiopia or Abyssinia:—

"And as they (the Seraphim and Cherubim) always praise and sanctify Thee, so do Thou receive these our praises and thanksgivings which we offer to Thee, saying, 'Holy, Holy, Holy.'

"*People.* 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth. Heaven and earth are full of the holiness of Thy glory.'"

From a Liturgy used in ancient Persia, called the Liturgy of the Apostles. According to Neale (Holy Eastern Church, General Introduction, vol. i. pp. 319, 321) "this Liturgy bears every mark of the remotest age. It is simple, stern, entirely unlike the pompous effusions of later writers, evidently incapable of being derived from any amplification or change of the offices of Cesarea or Jerusalem." The introduction to the Tersanctus is so singularly good that I give it in full:—

"Worthy is praise from every mouth, and confession from all tongues, and worship and exaltation from all creatures unto the adorable and glorious name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, who created the world from His goodness, and the inhabitants thereof by His loving-kindness, and who hath saved mankind by His mercy, and magnified His grace upon the perishing. Thy Majesty, O Lord, a thousand thousand spirits and ten thousand times ten thousand holy angels, the intellectual hosts, the ministers and spirits of fire, the holy Cherubim and spiritual Seraphim, do sanctify and celebrate and praise without end to one another, crying,

"*People.* 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, Heaven and earth are full of His glory.'"

From the Mozarabic, a Liturgy which the Court of Rome is obliged to tolerate in a few churches in Spain, and which, as Mr. Neale has proved, embodies what remains of the Gallican or Celtic Liturgies. In all probability, this very form of the Tersanctus was the one used in Britain before the native Liturgy was superseded by the Roman:—

"It is meet and right that we should extol," &c. [What follows varies with the Sunday or Festival, as our own proper prefaces do, but to a much greater extent.] "Whom angels and archangels extol, thus saying, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth, Heaven and earth are full of the glory of thy Majesty. Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the Highest.'"

CHAPTER V.

THE CHRISTIAN PRIESTHOOD.

SECTION I.

THE SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE OF THE MINISTRY.

We have considered somewhat at length in two former chapters (that on Baptism and on the Eucharist) how God has been pleased to offer to us certain great benefits in the faithful use of two Sacraments, each having an outward sign, in the right reception of which we hope to receive the inward grace. We have now to advance a step further, and consider a question closely connected with this.

If God leads us to expect certain great benefits in the right reception of such things as Baptism and the Lord's Supper, then He makes us partakers of these benefits, not directly from Himself, but indirectly through the instrumentality of others, for we receive the outward visible signs of these Sacraments through the hands of our fellowmen, who administer these things in the Church. It is quite clear also that if we receive these benefits from God through the hands of others, we must receive them in virtue of some official power which they have to administer them.[1] I mean that neither the talents nor the spirituality

[1] In speaking here of official power, I am not alluding to what we call ministerial or apostolic succession. If a man can receive the Sacraments from the hands of a layman, that layman is there and then God's minister to the other, to administer to him that which it would be either unlawful or unfitting for him to give to himself.

of the person administering add to or take away from any benefit which the true Christian receives in such things as the two Sacraments.

All sects who profess to administer the Sacraments, and to believe that any benefit whatsoever is attached to their faithful reception, must hold that this official power yet exists in some shape or other.

But in addition to this, the Catholic Church has ever held that her ministers have power from God to dispense officially certain other benefits to the faithful—in some cases, by word of mouth, as in absolution or benediction; in other cases, by laying on of hands, as in confirmation and ordination.

As an integral part of the Catholic Church, the Church of England claims these powers. According to our Ordinal, the ministers of the second order are set apart to their office by the imposition of hands, the Bishop being then directed to say: "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands; whose sins thou dost forgive they are forgiven, and whose sins thou dost retain they are retained."

Here, then, an official or ministerial power of remitting and retaining sins is claimed to be both given and received.

The nature and limitations of this power we shall afterwards consider. It is clear that in some sense a power of forgiving and retaining sins is given, if words, and very simple words too, have any meaning.

In accordance with this we are furnished with certain forms of words, in the use of which the person ordained is to exercise this power. One is the absolution in daily service, to be said by the priest alone—that is, by a person who has had authority committed to him by the laying on of hands, accompanied with the words I have quoted.

Another is the absolution in the "Visitation of the sick," which runs thus: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to His Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in Him, of His great mercy forgive thee thine offences, and by His authority committed unto me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

In addition, then, to the functions which her ministers discharge as teachers or preachers, the beneficial effect of which, under God, depends on their own hearts and intellects, the Church claims for her ministers the exercise of certain other functions, which they exercise more officially as it were, but in the exercise of which functions they are supposed to convey to those who are in a fitting state to receive them, certain great benefits pertaining to the kingdom of God.

Before investigating the Scripture grounds which we have for all this, it may be well to state at the outset that the whole matter is a question of *things*, and not of *words*.

It is perfectly immaterial to the matter in dispute, whether the word "priest" in the Prayer-book be the translation of a word which implies real sacerdotal functions, or whether it be the word "presbyter" in a contracted form.

Supposing that it is the latter, then our Church claims for every "presbyter" ordained according to her ordinal at least one sacerdotal function which no priest of the order of Aaron ever exercised, for to no priest of the order of Aaron were any such words said at his consecration as, "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of thy ministry. Whose soever sins thou dost remit, they are remitted."

It is in reality immaterial to the great principle involved whether our word "priest" be a translation of the Hebrew

Cohen, or the Greek ἱερεὺς, or the Latin Sacerdos; or whether the Greek word ἱερεὺς is ever applied to a Christian minister in the New Testament; because, in any case we should have to ascertain independently what were the functions of the office so designated.

The question does not respect a *word* but a *thing*, or rather a *principle*, and may be expressed thus: Does God bestow all things pertaining to salvation directly from Himself? or does God lead us to expect certain great blessings pertaining to salvation, not directly, but indirectly—through means of grace which He has Himself established, and of which means He ordains certain of our fellow-creatures to be the administrators?

It is allowed on all hands that in the matter of the conversion of souls God ordinarily acts upon man through his fellow-man. He does not preach the Gospel as He once proclaimed the law, by a voice from heaven, but He calls sinners to repentance by the voice of their fellow-sinners.

What, however, we have now to consider is, whether in *other* matters bearing upon our eternal well-being God has been pleased to lead us to expect certain blessings through the intervention of our fellow-men, administering to us certain ordinances of His Church.

Before proceeding to examine the direct teaching of the word of God upon this matter, we shall call attention to a well-known place which will bring out clearly the principle. It being understood that we cite this place merely as an illustration, not as a proof of the principle for which we contend.

In Isaiah vi. we have an account of the appearance of the Lord Himself to the prophet, as he was worshipping in the temple. Confounded by the visible manifestation of his Maker's glory, he exclaimed, "Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the

Lord ot Hosts." Upon this, one of the Seraphim flew to him, and touched his lips with a live coal, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar, and at the same time pronounced this absolution, "Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away and thy sin purged."

And Isaiah believed this, for when the Lord Himself asks immediately afterwards, "Whom shall I send?" he answers with holy confidence, "Here I am, send me." Now we should, I think, have supposed that God would have pronounced with His own mouth the absolution of such a man as Isaiah; or rather, we should have expected that God in such a transaction would have not even allowed His voice to be heard, but would have given to the prophet some secret assurance of his forgiveness.

But it was God's good pleasure to take neither of these means. Though Isaiah was one who was continually receiving revelations direct from God, and saying in His name, "Thus saith the Lord," and though the prophet was standing in His immediate presence, yet God pronounced his absolution through the angel, and the angel himself used a significant act, or outward sign, to assure the prophet. But even this is not all; the angel connected the "taking away of iniquity" with the authorized temple-service of atonement, or sacrifice, for he touched the prophet's lips with a live coal from off the altar, on which some sacrifice was burning.

Unless, then, this vision is delusive, it cannot be contrary to the glory of God to make use of subordinate agents and outward visible signs to convey even such things as cleansing and forgiveness, for He actually represents Himself as employing such agents when He is visibly present; and in the case of one to whom He vouchsafed such direct communications respecting the One Atoning

Sacrifice as we have in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah's prophecy.[1]

We shall now take the three dispensations, Patriarchal, Jewish, and Christian, in their order, and see how they bear on this matter.

I. As to the Patriarchal. The first mention of a priest is in the following passage: "And Melchizedec, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine, and he was the priest of the most high God, and he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abraham of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth, and blessed be the most high God which hath delivered thine enemies into thine hand. And he (Abraham) gave him tithes of all." (Gen. xiv. 18—20.)

Now, we should have said, that if ever a man trod the earth who needed no blessing from the lips of his fellow-mortal it was Abraham, for thrice before this had God appeared to him, and once at least had God promised to Abraham that all the nations of the earth should be blessed in him. What need, then, had such a man of Melchizedec's blessing? Why should a priest interpose betwixt God and Abraham? And yet it was needful, because God ordained that this Priest-King of Salem should bless even "him that had the promises."

And this benediction of Abraham, by Melchizedec, was immediately followed by Abraham's justification.[2]

[1] "Lo, this hath touched thy lips." He shows that the confirmation which was obtained by the sign was not without effect; but that the blessing signified by it was at the same time bestowed, so that Isaiah knew that he had not been deceived. Hence we may infer that in the Sacraments the reality is given to us along with the sign; for when the Lord holds out a Sacrament, He does not feed our eyes with an empty and unmeaning figure, but joins the truth with it so as to testify that by means of them He acts upon us efficaciously. (Calvin on Isaiah, vi. 7.)

[2] Compare Genesis xv. 1—6, with Romans iv. 1 and 20, 21, 22.

Now it does not appear to me that God, by this transaction, conferred any honour or dignity on any order of men, considered as priests or ministers, but rather that in all this He asserted His own sovereignty—that He had a right to convey His blessings as He chose.

For here was Abraham, whom God had honoured above all other men, by frequent personal converse with Himself. God had made his name great, and the name of no mere man stands out in history like that of Abraham. And Abraham was the especial type of the Christian, as one who is justified by faith, and embraces the promises. And yet God's providence leads this man to a priest, to be blessed by this priest; a priest who, whatever be the typical glories of his person and office, was then known only as one among the kings of Canaan.

Whatever else, then, we are taught by this account, we are certainly taught this, that no man, no matter what his spiritual hold on Christ, can assume to be above receiving blessing from any one to whom God may have given a commission to impart that blessing: we are also most emphatically taught, that direct communications from God Himself, by no means supersede the necessity for more indirect communication from Him, if God has been pleased so to ordain.

II. We now come to the Jewish dispensation. I need scarcely multiply proofs, that in this dispensation, the principle for which we are contending occupies a very prominent place.

God ordained that out of the twelve tribes into which His people were divided, one whole tribe should be set apart, to give attendance in His Sanctuary. Their chief function in this Sanctuary was to make atonement.

God, Who could have pardoned His people without the intervention of any outward means, seeing that He had it

in His mind to provide an all-sufficient, all-prevailing Sacrifice, was yet pleased to ordain that the sins of His people should be formally remitted only through the offering of certain sacrifices, which the priests were to receive from them, and to offer to the Lord.

Thus, with respect to such sins as violence, or deceitfully appropriating the property of another, and even swearing falsely concerning it; it is said that to be forgiven, a man must not only restore and add the fifth part, but "bring a trespass-offering unto the Lord, a ram without blemish out of the flock, and the priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord, and it shall be forgiven him for any thing of all that he hath done in trespassing therein." (Levit. vi. 1—8.) No sacrifices of any sort were lawful, except the priests assisted in some way or other in their offering.[1]

Other functions pertained to the priests: they had to offer incense; to pronounce respecting the cleansing of the leper; to set the shewbread in order upon the table; and to bless the people in the name of the Lord.

More particularly, one of their number, the high-priest, had to offer yearly certain sacrifices of peculiar sanctity. By these he apparently procured for the whole Church and nation, what the inferior priests procured for each individual who brought his separate offering. We read (Levit. xvi. 30), "On that day shall the priest make an atonement for you to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord .... and the priest .... shall make the atonement, and shall put on the linen clothes, even the holy garments: and he shall make an

[1] For the case of the burnt-offering, see Levit. i. 7, 11, 12, 15, 17; of the meat-offering, Levit. ii. 2, 8, 16; of the peace-offering, Levit. iii. 2, 5, 8, 11, 13; of the sin-offering, Levit. iv. 5, 16, 17, 20, 25, 26; of the trespass-offering, Levit. v. 8, 10, 13.

atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar, and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation."

So far, then, as the Jewish dispensation is concerned, the fact or principle is very clearly revealed, that God led His people to expect certain great blessings through the agency of their brethren.

But this dispensation was only preparatory. It was intended to pass away after it had fulfilled its mission, which was to set forth principles which would lead men in due time more faithfully to accept, and better to understand a final dispensation—the dispensation of the One Only True and Real Priest.

There are three points in which the subordinate priesthood of this preparatory dispensation bears upon the ministerial agency of the New Testament dispensation.

First, the fact that God separated or sanctified the whole nation to Himself, to be a "kingdom of priests," did not prevent His separating the tribe of Levi to be His priests in a peculiar sense; to do things on behalf of their brethren, which it was not lawful for them to do themselves, and to convey certain blessings which were not ordinarily to be expected, except through their hands.

The priesthood of all Christians, as members of the mystical body of the One Priest, is not more distinctly recognised by St. Peter, when he writes to his converts, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood" (1 Pet. ii. 9); than is the corresponding priesthood of *all* the Israelites recognised by God Himself, speaking to them through Moses, in the words, "Ye shall be to me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation." (Ex. xix. 6.) Indeed, the words of St. Peter are but a citation or adaptation of these words of God to the Jews.

The fact, then, that all in the Church of God are priests of God, does not for a moment clash with another fact, that God selects a certain order of men out of His Church, and makes them priests, in a special sense, to minister to their brethren.

A second point also demands attention.

Since the fall of Adam there has been but One True Priest, the Lord Jesus; and but one atonement, His Body broken, and His Blood shed for the remission of sin.

If we had not the assertion of an apostle for it, we might be sure of this, that the blood of bulls and of goats could never take away sin.

But it is most certain, that if the Book of Leviticus be in any sense the inspired word of God, He would have His people regard these sacrifices and burnt-offerings as effecting some real atonement.

Thus, of the burnt-offering it is said (Levit. i. 4), "It shall be accepted for him, to make atonement for him." Also, of the trespass-offering (Levit. v. 10), "The priest shall make atonement for him, for his sin which he hath sinned, and it shall be forgiven him." Above all, it is said, respecting the great yearly expiation (Levit. xvi. 30), "On that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord."

We cannot well imagine words more descriptive of real atoning efficacy than these, for here is cleansing, so that the worshippers may be clean "before the Lord."

There seems to me but one reconciliation between these statements, and that of the Apostle in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is this,—that these sacrifices cleansed, not from any virtue whatsoever in themselves, but because they were the ordained means of making men *in some sort* partakers of the one all-sufficient sacrifice.

These sacrifices were efficacious—they made atonement; they cleansed from sin before the Lord, not because God saw any virtue in them, but because the virtue of the one sacrifice was, in some degree, reflected back upon them.[1]

And so with the priests—compared with the One Priest, who was to give Himself, they were no priests, for there never has been, and never can be, but One Real Priest; but though, set side by side with Him, they were no priests; yet, compared with their brethren, the children of Israel, they were priests, for by God's appointment they ministered atonement; they even "cleansed before the Lord."[1]

And if God has ordained it, it may be so at the present time. Now that the all-prevailing sacrifice has been offered and accepted, God may see fit to ordain, that its efficacy should be imparted to particular souls through ordinances administered by office-bearers in His Son's Church.

Let us ever remember that the Jewish priestly system was, after all, but *ministerial* agency, for Aaron or Eleazar, on the great day of atonement, were, in very deed, only *ministers* dispensing to their brethren what was not their own; and, indeed, in a considerable number of places in the Old Testament, the words "priest" and "minister" are evidently considered as synonymous; for the one is put as the explanation of the other: thus, in Joel i. 9, we have "the priests, the Lord's ministers, mourn." Again, in verse 17, "Let the priests the ministers of the Lord weep between the porch and the altar:" also, Isaiah lx. 6, "Ye shall be named the priests of the Lord: men shall call you the ministers of our God."

[1] It should be carefully remembered that the principle for which I am contending is altogether independent of the nature or extent of the cleansing or atonement effected by the Jewish sacrifices. If they only availed to the merest "purifying of the flesh," still that purification came from God, and was dispensed to individual Israelites through the ministrations of their brethren.

The point is, not what these men are called, but what they *minister*.

The third point respecting the Old Dispensation and its bearing on the New in things pertaining to the ministry which I would draw attention to is this: we have several very clear prophecies of the kingdom of Christ, in which it was plainly foretold that "priests" and "Levites" would exercise their respective offices under the rule of the Great Spiritual David.

Thus, in Jeremiah xxxiii. 15—22, we have a prophecy of our Lord under the figure of the "Branch of Righteousness" growing up unto David, and executing judgment and righteousness, and that "David should not want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel." Unless this prophecy is fulfilled in the person of Jesus, the Son of David, it never has been and never can be fulfilled, for the actual family of David fell into obscurity shortly after the return from the captivity, and has now been extinct for eighteen hundred years.

It is evident, then, that this prophecy is fulfilled in the present kingdom of Christ, the Son of David; but the prophet distinctly foretells that, under the rule of David's Son there should be "priests Levites," to offer "burnt offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually." (Chap. xxxiii. verse 18.)

Now, according to the letter there never have been these things under Christ, but, according to the spirit and truth of Christian ordinances, there ever has been, as we have shown in our observations on the Eucharist. The same prophecy is repeated with still greater emphasis in the twenty-first verse.

Here, then, we have the ministers of the New Dispensation prophesied of under the same names as those by which God's ministers were known under the Old Covenant.

Again, in Malachi, the last of the prophets, we have the Saviour spoken of as "the Messenger of the Covenant," and one of His acts is "to purify the sons of Levi that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness." This place can only be understood of Christ purifying to Himself a ministry from amongst His people: for if the universal priesthood of all Christian people were here predicted, it would never be designated as the purification of one particular tribe, to which tribe pertained the service of the sanctuary, whilst the whole people of God, as distinguished from that tribe, are mentioned, also, as "Judah and Jerusalem" in the next verse. (Mal. iii. 3, 4.)

If God had intended that under the new state of things the Priesthood of Christ should render any assumption of subordinate priesthood on the part of Christian ministers, blasphemous or incongruous, why should He have inspired Jeremiah to predict the ministrations of "priests" under the rule of His Son?

And if God had intended that in the dispensation of Christ there should be no ministerial priesthood between the High Priesthood of His Son and the general priesthood of all the redeemed, why should He have caused Malachi to predict that His Son when He came should purify, not all Israel, but, in an especial manner, the "sons of Levi," Levi being only one tribe of the Holy people, specially set apart above his brethren to give attendance at the altar.

III. We now come to the dispensation of the One True Priest and One True Sacrifice. Did this Priest ordain any ministry? If He did, What position in His system and what power or functions did He assign to it?

If He assigned to His ministers that they should dispense the benefits of His atonement either by word of mouth or by significant acts, such as Sacraments, then these men were as much priests in reality as any Jewish

or Patriarchal priests. For, as I said, we have not to do with names but with things.

In looking to the Evangelic narrative we find that, next to the prominence given to the All-gracious Person of the Saviour Himself, our attention is fastened by the Holy Ghost on this fact, that the Saviour chose out of the remainder of His disciples twelve men, whom He associated with Himself, and whom He identified with Himself in every way. He constituted these men His ministers, His fellow workers, and His representatives. He employed them to do the things which He Himself did; and, after His crucifixion, He gave them a commission from Himself similar to that on which He had Himself acted :—"As My Father sent Me, so send I you." (John xx. 21.)

Let us see to the Scripture evidence for this. Our Lord must have had a very large number of disciples in addition to those whom He attached to Himself as Apostles. We read continually of "many believing on Him." (John iv. 39, vi. 60—66, vii. 31, viii. 30.) We read of His appearing after His resurrection to "five hundred brethren." (1 Cor. xv.) Out of all these followers He chose twelve. The account of this in St. Luke (vi. 13) is, "He called unto Him His disciples, and out of them He chose twelve, whom also He named Apostles." Then follows a list of the mere names of these twelve. And it is a fact very significant of the official position of the Apostles in the system, that the Holy Ghost has seen fit to cause four lists of the bare names of these men to be recorded. (Matt. x. 1; Mark iii. 14; Luke vi. 13; Acts i. 13.)

The call of four of them is the first event of our Lord's ministry recorded by St. John. (John i. 35—43.) The call of the same four, or of three of them, is the first event recorded by St. Matthew. (Matt. iv. 18—22.)

If we are to gather anything respecting the principles

of the Kingdom or Church of God from Christ's own deeds, then ministerial agency, as distinguished from the action of the rest of the Church, must be a principle of that Kingdom.

This is still more manifest from the position assigned to these men. They are, as a rule, distinguished from the rest of the disciples as "the twelve." When one of them falls from his high standing, the rest are called "the eleven." When the number is filled up, they are again "the twelve." When they were insufficient for the work, our Lord appoints additional labourers, but these are carefully distinguished from the twelve. The words are, "The Lord appointed other seventy also." (Luke x. 1.)

Our Lord identifies Himself with them in very extraordinary terms. "I appoint unto you a Kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me." (Luke xxii. 29.) To one of them He said, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven." (Matt. xvi. 19.) On another occasion He gives, (in the same words,) the same binding and loosing power to all. (Matt. xviii. 18.)

It is not now my purpose to explain these passages; I would only remark in passing, that such extraordinary words from the Eternal Son of God must be intended to convey something more than the power to deliver a mere message of pardon.

If the asserters of ministerial authority had found no words in our Sacred books to give colour to their pretensions, and had desired to foist in words to serve their purpose, they could hardly have invented stronger.

Such a power, of course, can only be subordinate and ministerial, and to be exercised in accordance with Christ's word, and in trembling subordination to His ratification;

but that there is some real room for its exercise we must allow, if we believe that Christ would not have ordained what is superfluous.

To realize how our Lord would raise these men up to the true greatness of the position which He designed for them, the reader must examine the Gospels for himself—extracts or references to texts can give but a very inadequate idea of the truth on this point. I would, however, direct his attention to the two sister miracles of our Lord's miraculously feeding the multitudes in the wilderness as illustrating somewhat the position which the Apostles occupied. (Matt. xiv. 15; xv. 32.)

These two miracles are so very much alike in all their leading circumstances, that we can assign no reason why the Holy Spirit should have given to us four accounts of the one and two of the other, except this, that the miracle is especially a typical one, foreshadowing some great and gracious dealings of Christ with His Church. Now, in each account of these miracles we have it especially recorded, that Christ gave the bread to the disciples (or Apostles), and they to the multitude.

If, then, the multitudes represent the Church, and the feeding of these multitudes represents the feeding of that Church, either by doctrine or Eucharist, what can the distribution by the hands of the Apostles foreshadow, except a system of ministerial agency; and this agency not superseding Christ's own acting or obscuring His grace, but rather magnifying both?

It is quite clear, then, that Christ set apart certain persons to be His ministers, and put them into a remarkable position betwixt Himself and the rest of His followers.

We have now to consider the functions which these persons were deputed to exercise. Did their powers ex-

ceed, or come short of, the powers of those men who, in former dispensations were called priests?

If Christ assigned to His Apostles any power of showing forth the one atonement, and applying its benefits to the members of His Church, then He constituted these men priests in His Church. It matters not a straw whether the name of priests were given to them; the thing itself, the power, the function, which men usually attach to the name and office of priest, was theirs, if it was theirs to dispense to their brethren the benefits of the One Atoning Sacrifice.

Now, Christ commissioned His Apostles to do four things: to preach—to baptize—to administer the Lord's Supper—and to absolve.

Let us first take the power to baptize. Christ, on two occasions, after His resurrection, commissioned His Apostles to baptize. This commission was not given to the whole body of believers. Christ did not give it to the one hundred and twenty, or to the five hundred, but only to the eleven, by this stamping it as a ministerial act. (Matt. xxviii. 16—18, 19; Mark xvi. 14, 15.)

Now, when an Apostle, or minister commissioned by him, administered baptism to a convert—if we are to believe St. Paul—he there and then caused that that man should be buried with Christ; *i. e.* he made the convert, in some sort, a partaker of Christ's death, or, in modern phrase, an interest in Christ's death was made over to him.

Again, even such a man as St. Paul was bid to wash away his sins in baptism; and he, in his turn, makes mention of this Sacrament as the means by which Christ cleanses His Church. (Ephes. v. 26.)

Of course, such things can only take place because God has ordained baptism as a means by which He makes

men partakers of the benefits of His Son's atonement, for no one ever supposed that such a thing could cleanse of itself.

When, then, an Apostle baptized, he did a sacerdotal act of a far higher character than any act which Aaron was commissioned to do; for, concerning no act which Aaron had power to perform was it ever said that men were in it "buried with Christ," or "born again of water and of the Spirit."[1]

In the next place, our Lord empowered His Apostles to celebrate the Lord's Supper. The commission to do this was also not given to the whole Church gathered together into one place, but to the twelve alone.

Now, when an Apostle, or other minister commissioned by him, administered the Lord's Supper, what did he do?

In the first place, it is allowed on all hands, that he showed forth the Lord's death. He showed forth, before God and the Church, not his faith in the Lord's death, but the death itself; and, surely, this was a far greater thing in the sacerdotal sense than any act which Aaron was

[1] All this is quite unaffected by the question of the validity of lay Baptism. The principle for which I am contending is, not that God *rigidly* confines the grace of the Sacraments to those who receive them through authorized ministers, but that He has ordained a system of regular ministration in His Church. If He has done this, we cannot but expect that He will be with His own institution to insure the validity of its ministrations.

How far, and in what cases, under exceptional circumstances, the ministrations of laymen or ministers not regularly ordained are valid, I do not stop to consider. My purpose is to show that God, in having ordained a ministry for the regular celebration of such things as the Sacraments, has established under the Christian dispensation *the principle*, that certain benefits, the results of redemption, are to be looked for, not directly from Himself, but indirectly through the hands of those whom He has authorized to dispense them.

appointed to do, if, that is, the act of celebrating Holy Communion be a more direct way of setting forth Christ crucified than the Old Law sacrifices.

Then, in the next place, by administering the Lord's Supper, the Apostles must have made men partakers of Christ's atonement; for, if the bread and wine, in any effectual sense, exhibit or represent the Body and Blood of Christ, they must make men partakers of the grace and power of that Body and Blood. If otherwise, they would be mere vain and ineffectual signs, having nothing like the virtue of the old Aaronic sacrifices.

But St. Paul says, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" And this, too, in a context full of sacrificial allusions.

When, then, an Apostle administered the bread, he gave to the believer that which Christ called His Body; and when an Apostle or other minister gave the cup, he gave to men what Christ had called, and so would have men esteem to be, "the New Covenant in His blood." He must, by so doing, have applied to his convert the One Atoning Sacrifice far more directly and intimately than any priest of the order of Aaron could have done by his sacrifices; for the words in which the Holy Communion is described, establish the most intimate relation possible between it and the One Atoning Sacrifice.

Then, in addition to this, our Lord commissioned His Apostles to absolve. This power He imparted to them, when He said to them, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye ~~do~~ retain, they are retained." (John xx.) When the Apostles exercised this power, which, if they were faithful to their Master's commission,

they must frequently have done, they must then have applied to those whom they absolved the Atonement wrought out by their Master. If not, they must have absolved on the score of their own personal merits; a position for which, I suppose, none would contend.

If, then, there be but One True Priest, and if all subordinate priesthood, Jewish or Christian, is instituted simply for the application of the Atonement of this One True Priest, then an Apostle, when he absolved according to Christ's commission, exercised priestly functions in a way far more direct, and by an authority far nearer to the fountain of all authority to atone, than Aaron ever did, even when on the great Day of Atonement he cleansed the people from all their sins "before the Lord."

When the Church, then, was founded, the Saviour Himself appointed certain men to exercise functions of a far more sacerdotal character than any before them, because the exercise of these functions was far more intimately connected with His own Atoning Sacrifice.[1]

[1] As some persons, however, may stumble at this because the actual name of priest is never applied to a Christian minister, I have taken the liberty of transcribing the following passage from a well-known work, showing most fully the reasons why the name of priest was for some time in abeyance.

"The term 'Sabbath,' like the term 'Priest,' is employed nowhere in the New Testament in reference to Christianity. The case is even stronger with regard to the term 'Sabbath,' than that of 'Priest.' For the observance of Holy Days, and specifically of the Sabbath day, is spoken of with positive reprobation, as destructive of the simplicity of faith in Christ. 'Let no man therefore judge you in meat or drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, *or of the Sabbath days*, which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.' (Col. ii. 16.) And again, 'Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years: I am afraid of you.' (Gal. iv. 10.) Again, it may seem, on a superficial view, from the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, that all sabbatical

The greater part of these men survived the close of the New Testament history. The Acts of the Apostles carries us down to A.D. 58 and SS. Peter and Paul were not martyred till ten years afterwards, so that during the whole of the New Testament period the heads of the Church must have exercised sacerdotal functions of the highest character, and we have not a syllable throughout the whole book to intimate that these functions were either to cease, or to be in abeyance.

We have now to consider the question whether the Apostles had any power to commit the exercise of these

observances, or days of rest, had passed away with the coming in of a deeper spiritual life, and that the only rest contemplated by the Gospel is the soul's inward repose on Christ. Yet coincidentally with this rejection of the term Sabbath, and of holy days and seasons, the Apostles and brethren were observing the Lord's day; and Passion Tide, Easter, and the Wednesdays and Fridays of the week, as days of observance associated with the betrayal and crucifixion of our Lord, may be traced up through the dimness of the earliest tradition to the age of the Apostles. In the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, also, the term Sabbath never occurs except in connexion with the Jewish apostacy, which was stigmatized by the opprobrious name of 'Sabbatizing.' Later still, S. Augustine speaks of the Sabbath as observed only spiritually and having its fulfilment in Christ. The subsequent history of the two terms entirely coincides. Both rose to life again after a time, and became fixed in the ordinary language of the Church, only the term Priest at a much earlier date than the other. The term Sabbath has not been used of the day of Christian observance until quite modern times. From the remarkable similarity, there can scarcely be a doubt, that the same principle has operated in both cases. While there was danger to be apprehended from Jewish ideas becoming attached to the New System, from mere confusion, or from the appearance of antagonism, the Jewish terms were suspended, though the *ideas* of Priesthood and Sabbath passed into the Christian system, and when this danger no longer existed, and the separation of the two systems was complete, the terms themselves were again freely used."—(From Carter's "Doctrine of the Priesthood," p. 122.)

functions to others. If they had not, then only those Christians with whom they came in personal contact could have either been baptized, or received the Lord's Supper, or absolution; for I must ask the reader to bear in mind that the original commissions to preach the Gospel, to baptize, to administer the Lord's Supper, and to remit and retain sin, were given solely to the Apostles, for they and they only are mentioned as present when the commissions to do these things were given, and certain words in the Acts of the Apostles seem to limit all to them. (Acts i. 2, in connexion with Matt. xxviii. 16, 18, 19; Mark xvi. 14, 15; John xx. 19—27; Acts x. 40—42.) Our Lord might have assembled all His followers together, and given to all of them power to do these things, and it appears to me that He would have done so if He had intended to maintain the universal priesthood of the whole Church or body of believers, to the exclusion of that of the ministers of His Church: but He did the very opposite of this. He gave power only to the Apostles, so that at His ascension the Apostles were the sole commissioned ministers of the Church.

In order that these functions might be perpetuated, Christ or the Holy Spirit gave to the Apostles the power of transmitting the authority to exercise them by means of the "laying on of hands," or Ordination.

This laying on of hands was so prominent a feature in the New Dispensation, that it is included amongst the first principles of the doctrine of Christ; the foundations of Christianity. (Heb. vi. 1—4.)

Every officer of the Church, from the Apostle (Acts xiii. 2) to the Deacon (Acts vi. 6), was set apart or consecrated to his office by this imposition of hands.

We have reason to say, I believe, that every office-bearer of the Church was thus set apart; for, if the Apostles

would not commit to others so apparently secular a business as the control of the distribution of certain alms, without first laying their hands on those to whom they assigned this work, we may safely assume that no spiritual functions whatsoever would be committed by them to others without this imposition of hands.

In the last of the Pastoral Epistles, we find this principle of transmission of power by imposition of hands recognised as the appointed means of continuing in the Church the functions of the ministry. St. Paul bids Timothy stir up the gift that was in him, by the putting on of his (St. Paul's) hands (2 Tim. i. 6), and bids him also, in his turn, lay hands suddenly on no man. (1 Tim. v. 22.)

It is clear, then, that not only were there ministers delegated by Christ Himself to exercise the highest sacerdotal functions, but also that provision was made that the exercise of those functions should be perpetual.

SECTION II.

ABSOLUTION.

THIS seems the place to discuss certain objections which have been urged against the doctrine of Absolution.

The power to absolve was given in the words, "As My Father sent Me, so send I you: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them, and whose soever sins ye retain they are retained." (John xx. 22.)

Any *bonâ fide* attempt on the part of the Church to give effect to these words has occasioned, in these latter days, great stumbling.

Some men have said that there cannot be any delegated

power of remission conferred by them, or by any other words. It is as good as implied that Christ Himself could not have given any such power. So it is said that these words must be taken as merely giving authority to "preach the Gospel."

The Gospel, it is said, makes known the terms on which God will forgive: and so, when our Lord says, "Whose soever sins ye remit they are remitted;" men assert that He really means, "If ye preach the Gospel, and any one believes it, then God will forgive that man his sins [without any further ministerial action on your part]."

Now, inasmuch as Christ Himself had, in the plainest terms, and on two occasions, given to the Apostles a commission to preach the Gospel (Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15), it is inconceivable that the Lord should, on this occasion, have expressed so simple a matter in terms so exceedingly ambiguous, and so certain of being misunderstood. How could any one, who wished his meaning to be clear, tell certain persons to do a particular thing, when He really meant them merely to publish the news that, on certain conditions, another would do what they were commissioned to do; they who were told to do it having no part, even ministerially, in the actual doing?

I say, ministerially, for no one imagines that the declaration of absolution is anything but ministerial.

Now it appears to me far less dishonourable to our Lord at once to reject His words, and refuse to entertain them, than to put on them a gloss which makes Him express a very plain and ordinary thing in terms so very extraordinary, startling, and ambiguous.

That these words were liable, if acted on, to prove a stumbling-block, is clear from the fact, that He Himself had been once accused of blasphemy for claiming to do what His words to the Apostles apparently give power to

do. He claimed to forgive the sins of the man sick of the palsy, in the words, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee." (Matt. ix. 2.) And when accused by His adversaries of usurping the prerogative of God, He neither softened nor explained away His words; nor did He assert that, as God, He possessed an inherent right to forgive. On the contrary, He claimed the authority, not as the Son of God, but *as the Son of Man*, "that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins." He claimed, then, on this occasion, to exercise, not an inherent, but a delegated power: and this delegated power He, in His turn, delegated to the Apostles. "All power," He says, "is GIVEN unto ME in heaven and in earth, go ye THEREFORE;" "As My Father sent Me, so send I you. Whose soever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them."

By such words our Lord could not have meant to give power merely to declare the terms on which God will forgive, for He must have been conscious that He Himself had been accused of assuming to absolve, and He must also have been conscious that, in future ages, His Church would ground on the plain meaning of these words a similar power to absolve.

I am ashamed to have to take up the reader's time with considering such a subterfuge; but my labour has not been lost if what I have said leads him to realize the extreme plainness and simplicity of our Lord's words on this occasion, and so the dangerous folly of attempting to put an evasive meaning on them.

In the second place, it has frequently been asserted that, though these words of Christ convey a real absolving power, yet that this power was limited to the Apostles themselves, and could not, like the authority to administer the sacraments, be conveyed by them to others.

But what reason have we to make such a difference between the power to administer sacraments and the power to absolve, that the former should be for all time, and that the latter should be limited to the Apostles and expire with their lives?

The two sacraments, and the form of absolution, are alike means of grace, instituted for the consolation and assurance of penitent sinners; and so it seems most unlikely that those sinners who lived in the immediate vicinity of the original Apostles should possess, *for a time only*, a means of grace which was denied to all other members of the Church.

It is incredible that a power against sin, or for the consolation of sinners, which this power which Christ gave was, should be confined to the time when the Church was the purest, *i.e.* the most free from sin. As one of our greatest divines, Jeremy Taylor, has well asked, "When went it [the power of remitting and retaining] out? When the anointing and miraculous healing ceased? There is no reason for that; for, forgiveness of sins was not a thing visible, and, therefore, could not be of the nature of miracles, to confirm the faith and Christianity first, and, after its work was done, return to God that gave it; neither could it be only of present use to the Church, but as eternal as sin is: and, therefore, there could be nothing in the nature of the thing to make it so much as suspicious that it was presently to expire."

It has also been most ignorantly urged against absolution, that the Apostles performed miracles, and that because they did this and their successors do not, therefore their successors have no authority to pronounce absolution. But what connexion is there between the two? Christianity is for the comfort and healing of the soul, not of the body. The gifts of healing were given to establish the truth of

Christianity. When its truth was fully established they passed away, but all in Christianity that has to do with the comfort or healing of the soul must still continue.

It is a remarkable fact, that the only mention of miraculous cures as accrediting the Apostolic commission is given, not in connexion with absolution, but in connexion with "*the preaching of the Gospel;*" or rather with "believing." "These signs shall follow them that believe," &c. (Mark xvi. 17.) Would any one say that no one now believes, because we do not lay hands on the sick and they recover?

There is somehow an idea that even a delegated and conditional power of absolution is too sacred a matter to be exercised by man; but when we attentively consider it, is it one whit more difficult to apprehend that man can absolve than that man can administer the Lord's Supper? if we have, that is, the slightest respect to the terms in which Christ and St. Paul speak of the Eucharist.

For, when a minister, acting on Christ's commission, administers the Eucharist, what does he do but enable his fellow-sinner to partake, in a heavenly and spiritual way, of the Body and Blood of the Son of God?

Is it one whit more easy to believe that one man can be the instrument, in God's hands, of communicating to another that inward part, to which the Saviour applies such terms as His Body and His Blood, than to believe that the same man can, in the name of the same Omnipresent Saviour, and by the use of certain words, make his penitent fellow-sinner a partaker of the atonement purchased by the breaking of that Body of Christ, and shedding of His blood?

Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and Absolution are all alike in this respect, that they are means of applying the atonement, or blood of Christ, to the believer through the hands of others, *i.e. ab extra.*

They differ in this respect from prayer or from internal acts of faith, for a man can pray and exercise faith without any intervention of his fellow-man; but he cannot either baptize, or administer the Lord's Supper to, or absolve himself; and so, if he receives any benefit through these appointments of Christ, he must submit to receive that benefit through the instrumentality or intervention of his fellow man, and that benefit comes from the exalted human nature of Christ. Whether it be the remission of sin, as in baptism, or the strengthening and refreshing of his soul by the Body and Blood of Christ, or absolution, all is from Christ, and is a partaking of Him; and it is just as difficult to believe that a man can help his fellow-man to partake of Christ in one of these ways as in another.

But it has been objected that the Apostles had this power conferred upon them because they had the power of "discerning of spirits," and that the latter gift is necessary to the right exercise of absolution; but they who say this totally mistake the nature and intent of this gift of "discerning of spirits." There is no evidence whatesover that the power of "discerning of spirits" was a power of reading the heart. It was simply a power to pronounce whether such or such spiritual utterances were from God or not.

When the Spirit was largely poured forth, and men were endowed with various gifts of knowledge and utterance, there was, as yet, no canon of the New Testament by which these utterances could be judged. Satan then raised up, in opposition to God's truth, men who professed to teach as from the Spirit what was contrary to God's truth; and these men not unfrequently came as "angels of light," and so the Churches would have been at their mercy, had not God raised up in each Church men whose

critical faculties were so supernaturally informed, and strengthened, and purified, that they were able to pronounce who spake by God's Spirit and who not.

We have no evidence that the Apostles, as they moved amongst men, were able to read their hearts. They appear to have judged of others as we have to do, by their profession and their conduct.

It appears to me little short of blasphemy to suppose that this discerning of spirits was a discerning of the thoughts and intents of the heart; for this latter is, throughout Scripture, ascribed to God only, as one of His incommunicable attributes: and yet we find that good men scruple not to ascribe this divine power to the Apostles in order to avoid granting to their successors a power of absolution, on the very face of it delegated, ministerial, subordinate, and conditional.

There is no evidence of any connexion between the power of granting absolution, and that of discerning of spirits, nor need there be, for the power to absolve was merely ministerial and conditional. The person who absolved, absolved not infallibly as a judge, but conditionally as a servant or minister—*always referring the ratification of his act to the Searcher of hearts.*

Absolution, of course, can only be a means of grace to sincere penitents, and so is exactly on the same footing as the two Sacraments. It was, no doubt, given from the very first, to those who appeared sincere in their profession of repentance, but the responsibility as to the right reception of it lay wholly with the man who applied for it.

Whatever difficulty there may be in realizing that a human being possesses this power, let us remember that Christ has taken the whole difficulty upon Himself, for He has commissioned men to bind and loose—to remit

and retain sin; and it is really as difficult to believe that one man can exercise such powers as that another can. It is really as hard to believe that St. Bartholomew or St. Andrew could remit or retain sin, as that any Bishop or Priest now can. But when Christ has given the power it seems to me a fearful tempting of Him to ask with the Pharisees, "Who can forgive sins but God only?" for by asking this we assume to have more regard than He has for the honour of God His Father.

It is clear, then, that we learn from the New Testament that God is pleased to convey some of the highest benefits of Christ's redemption through the instrumentality of subordinate agents, and by means of significant acts.

And let it be remembered, that if God established this principle in the Pentecostal Church, He has for ever disposed of all objections to it, on the ground that it hinders the individual intercourse of the soul with the Redeemer: for will any one dare to say that the Pentecostal Christians, who had all things common, and were of one heart and soul, and lived in constant daily prayer and praise, had less direct intercourse with Christ than the hearer at some modern places of worship, in which the principle of absolution, no matter how explained or modified, would be scouted?

No doubt that in after ages this great truth has been abused, so as to become priestcraft. No doubt, also, that men, seeing that the priest was commissioned to make them partakers of certain benefits, were tempted by Satan to regard his office as if by relying on it they could divest themselves of their individual responsibility. But what of this? We surely have not to be taught that the abuse of a thing is any argument whatsoever against the right use of it; if so, we should have to surrender the

Christian Sabbath, for that day is more abused than any other because it is the Sabbath, a day of leisure on which to commit sin, as well as to worship God.

SECTION III.

EXAMINATION OF THE ORDINAL.

We now come to see how this Scripture principle is recognised in the Prayer-book.

First of all we have an Ordinal containing three services, according to which the Apostolic rite of Ordination is to be administered, each service containing prayers, addresses to the people, questions to be asked of the candidate, and suitable readings from Scripture.

Let the reader bear in mind that from all which we can gather from Scripture, the Holy Ghost would have us regard the Apostles at our Lord's ascension as the sole depositories of all power to preach, administer Sacraments, ordain, or absolve—for no other ministers whatsoever are mentioned as having the words of the commission to perform ministerial acts.

Now, in what terms did Christ constitute the Apostles His ministers? Was their ministry inaugurated by acts and words which would lead us to take a high or a low view of it?

If, for instance, they were commissioned merely to preach or teach, they would have been commissioned to do what is ordinarily and naturally done by those who desire to propagate truths which they think will be useful. In such a case, no matter how high a view we were to take of the contents of their message as necessary to

salvation, we could scarcely take a high view of their commission. Their one business would have been to do, and in much the same way, what the propagators of all opinions have to do, and their success would mainly depend on the right use of natural gifts and acquirements, coupled with zeal, energy, and discretion. God might, of course, endow them with the highest supernatural gifts; but no matter how great these gifts were, they would only have been given to them to enable them to perform more efficiently a natural thing, *i.e.* to spread opinions which they believed to be useful or necessary to their fellow creatures.

Now the original New Testament ministers, *i.e.* the Apostles, were not merely commissioned to preach and teach.

They were commissioned to apply, by such things as Sacraments and absolution, that atonement which was wrought out by their Master on the cross.

And they received their commission, not in ordinary, but in very extraordinary terms—terms which are open to the scoff of the infidel, and the rationalist, and the secularist, as affording grounds for sacerdotal pretensions; but which terms were used by One who came to break the yoke of mere ritual and superstition from off men's necks, and to make them free indeed.

Consider such words as, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven;" "Verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven;" "As my Father sent Me, so send I you; whose soever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them."

These are not ordinary words. They are not the language of one who would wish His followers to take a rational, common-place, safe, ordinary view of the state of things He was establishing. They are most certainly not

the language of One who would wish His ministers to be regarded as mere propagators of doctrine, or teachers of morals.

Such words, if they mean anything, stamp the New Testament ministry as a continuation of that heavenly and supernatural ministry which He Himself exercised. They are wonderful and mysterious; but was not He who spake them surpassingly wonderful and mysterious, both in His person and office?

May I be permitted here to employ words which I have written and published some time ago, respecting the accordance between the mystery of Christ's own person and the mysteries of that state of things which He died to establish.

"Let us not deceive ourselves by the thought that a low view of the meaning of such words, said by such an One, under such circumstances, is the safest for our own souls, or the most deferential to our Saviour. The Man who spake the words was *God in our nature*—God manifest in the flesh, 'The Word made flesh.' He was, in very deed, 'Our Lord and our God.' In that frame, pierced though it was with spear and nails, dwelt the fulness of the Godhead. His very breath was sacramental—the outward visible sign of the transmission of the Spirit.

"And He had become what He was for the sake of the trembling sinners whose hearts He was then reassuring, and for [the sake of] those who should believe on Him through their word. In and through them He was on the point of setting up His Church. This Church was to be His fulness, so that even He did not reckon Himself complete without it.

"Of that Church collectively, it is said that it is 'His body.'

"Of the various individuals composing this Church it is

said in Scripture, that they are His 'members in particular;' nay, even members of His body—of His flesh and of His bones.

"Of the ministers of this Church it is said in Scripture, that they are ambassadors for Christ, stewards of God's mysteries, and from Christ as the Head, by them as joints and bands, the whole body having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God."

Such was the state of things on the eve of being established—heavenly and supernatural from beginning to end. Not a system of opinions, but a Divine organism; not a mere religion, but a KINGDOM OF GRACE! *And these words are its inauguration.*

They are wonderful words—surpassingly wonderful; but so is He who spake them; so was the occasion on which they were spoken; so is the Church which they created. They are almost beyond belief; but they are in keeping with the whole character of that dispensation in which man is saved by the *Son of Man*, and in which sinful men are made the brethren of the "*Only Begotten;*" called by Him His friends; united to Him as His members; associated with Him as His fellow-workers; and, hereafter, if they abide in Him, to be raised by Him to His throne.

The ministry, then, which these words inaugurate, is the New Testament ministry; and, though the men who originally received it have long gone to their rest, we have Christ's own word that it was to exist in their successors till He came again.

If our Ordinal is scriptural it must embody these words, and be the instrument for transmitting the commission contained in them.

An Ordinal is a service to be used at the time when Christian ministers receive their solemn commission.

I cannot see how we can in such a document honestly avoid stating the nature of this commission, and for what it makes them responsible, just as is the case in the deeds by which men are empowered to exercise any civil commission.

An Ordination Service which did not embody the substance of these words would be as unscriptural, in its way, as a statement which professed to give the glories of Christ, and omitted all mention of His Godhead, would be in its way.

If we had an Ordinal not recognising or embodying these words, we should have one deliberately framed to come short of the words of Christ; and, by using it, we should as good as assert that we put from us the highest view of the Christian ministry, and that the words of Christ inaugurating His ministry, have literally "passed away."

The Ordinal of the Church of England assumes that the ministry which Christ established will subsist, in its integrity, till His Second coming, and that He will be so "with it" by His Spirit, that every ordinance for the salvation or restoration of souls which He committed to its keeping is as efficacious now as it was at the beginning.[1]

We will first examine the office for the consecration of Bishops.

[1] It may be well here to call attention to the fact that the Ordinal is specially recognised in the Thirty-nine Articles. The thirty-sixth Article declares that "That the Book of Consecration of Archbishop, and Bishops, and ordering of Priests and Deacons, lately set forth in the time of Edward the Sixth, and confirmed at the same time by Act of Parliament, doth contain all things necessary to such consecration and ordination: neither hath it anything that, of itself, is superstitious and ungodly." No other part of the Prayer-book except the three Creeds has such an *imprimatur*.

This office commences with a collect, every line of which implies that the present ministry is a continuation of the Apostolic. "Almighty God, who by Thy Son Jesus didst give to Thy Holy Apostles many excellent gifts, and didst charge them to *feed Thy flock*, give grace, we beseech Thee, to all *Bishops, the pastors of Thy Church*, that they may diligently preach Thy word, and duly administer the godly discipline thereof," &c.

In accordance with the contents of this collect there is a choice of three portions of Scripture as the Gospel for the occasion. The first of these (John xxi. 15) containing the account of our Lord earnestly commanding the Apostle St. Peter to feed His lambs and sheep. The second (John xx. 19) containing the Apostolic commission, "As My Father sent Me, so send I you," &c. The third containing the Apostolic commission, as contained in St. Matthew xxviii. "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore," &c.

From the Church having chosen these places as the Gospels to be read in order to stir up our faith in the presence and power of Christ, it is evident that she considers that none of the words of Christ, which they contain, have passed away, but that all have a full present application.

Before the Litany there is a short address by the Archbishop:—

"Brethren, it is written in the Gospel of St. Luke, That our Saviour Christ continued the whole night in prayer, before He did choose and send forth His twelve Apostles. It is written also in the Acts of the Apostles, That the disciples who were at Antioch did fast and pray, before they laid hands on Paul and Barnabas, and sent them forth. Let us therefore, following the example of our Saviour Christ, and His Apostles, first fall to prayer, before we admit, and send forth this person presented unto us, to the work whereunto we trust the Holy Ghost hath called him."

After this the Bishop elect is consecrated to his ministry with the words:—

"Receive the Holy Ghost, for the office and work of a Bishop in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the Imposition of our hands; In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. And remember that thou stir up the grace of God which is given thee by this imposition of our hands: for God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and love, and soberness."

The reader will recognise the last sentence as the charge of the Apostle St. Paul to Timothy. (2 Tim. i. 6, 7.) The Archbishop adopts the words of St. Paul as his own; assuming that God has conferred through his hands the same ministerial grace which God conferred through St. Paul's hands.

In the words, "Receive the Holy Ghost, for the office and work of a Bishop," we have a recognition of the great Scripture truth that the Holy Ghost is the author, not only of all spiritual and moral ministerial influence, but also of all official authority in the Church of Christ. I cannot express this great truth better than in the words of Hooker (Eccles. Pol. v. ch. lxxvii. 5):—

"We know that spiritual gifts are not only abilities to do things miraculous, as to speak with tongues which were never taught us, to cure diseases without art, and such like, but also that the very authority and power which is given men in the Church to be ministers of holy things, this is contained within the number of those gifts whereof the Holy Ghost is author, and therefore he which giveth this power may say without absurdity or folly, 'Receive the Holy Ghost, such power as the Spirit of Christ hath endued His Church withal, such power as neither prince nor potentate, king nor Cæsar, on earth can give.'"

Again, William Law, in his second letter to Bishop Hoadley, has some words as forcible and as much to the point on this matter as even those of Hooker:—

"All sacerdotal power is derived from the Holy Ghost. Our Saviour Himself took not that ministry upon Him till He had this consecration. And during the time of His ministry, He was under the guidance and direction of the Holy Ghost. Through the Holy Spirit He gave commandment unto the Apostles whom He had chosen. When He ordained them to the work of the ministry, it was with these words, 'Receive the Holy Ghost.' Those whom the Apostles ordained to the same function, it was by the same authority: They laid their hands upon the elders, exhorting them to take care of the flock of Christ, over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers. Hereby they plainly declared, that however this office was to descend from man to man, through human hands, that it was the Holy Ghost which consecrated them to that employment, and gave them authority to execute it. From this it is also manifest, that the Priesthood is a grace of the Holy Ghost. That it is not a function founded on the natural or civil rights of mankind, but is derived from the special authority of the Holy Ghost; and is as truly a positive institution as the Sacraments."[1]

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[1] I trust it will not be considered presumptuous to give the following explanation from Appendix to my "Doctrinal Revision of the Liturgy considered":—

"Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of God."

"The words in the Ordering of Priests are more qualified and guarded in the book of 1662 than they are in that of 1552; for whereas, in the Prayer-book of 1552 the Bishop is directed to say, without any limitation whatsoever, 'Receive the Holy Ghost,' the present book directs him to say, 'Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of God.' Now we are at liberty to understand this as if, by the limitation, there was disclaimed any *power* of giving the Spirit except that strictly official and covenant gift which makes valid the official acts of the Priest who is ordained.

"A minister of Christ has two sorts of powers; he has moral power as a preacher of righteousness; and he has also official power to perform certain covenant acts in that outward and visible kingdom of God of which he is a duly constituted minister. His moral power is his ability, as a faithful teacher and preacher, to bring men to repentance and faith. This power depends on his

Let us now examine the "Form and manner of Ordering of Priests."

Priests are set apart to their office with words embodying the Lord's commission to His Apostles to absolve, in John xx. "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God, now committed

prayers, and study of God's Word, and (above all) individual application to his own soul of the work and promises of Christ.

"Not so his official power. No matter what his private character or public usefulness, whenever he baptizes (for instance) he admits the person baptized into that kingdom of which he is the official minister.

"At his ordination, the bishop transmits to him this latter power, complete—in its integrity—but the former power he only receives (or at least has a right to expect) in proportion to his own faith and prayer.

"Now the Church, in her form of ordination, bears witness to two great truths—

"1. That every official work of the minister is a work of the Spirit—so that the whole framework and fabric of Christianity—visible as well as invisible, is kept in existence by the Holy Spirit; so that we may be assured that we are living in the same dispensation of the Spirit which commenced at Pentecost; so that the words by which Apostles held even nominal Christians answerable for a gift of the Spirit, may be applied to Christians now.

"2. The Church, by her form of ordination, bears witness that this state of things does not depend upon the prayers of any bishops or priests who may ordain, but upon the never-failing promise of Christ; and so she shows the truest and most *submissive faith* in the promise of her Great Head, by directing the Bishop to say,—'Receive the Holy Ghost,' instead of directing him to pray—'Mayest thou receive,' &c.

"If this form was in the shape of a prayer, then its validity might, and no doubt would, be said to depend upon the faith or sincerity of the bishop who ordains.

"Now, on the contrary, it must be looked upon as an official act, for the transmission of an official power, and so the more clearly we mark the validity of the act, as not depending upon the private religion of the agent, the better."

unto thee by the imposition of our hands: whose sins thou dost forgive they are forgiven, and whose sins thou dost retain they are retained," &c.

The priest in the Church of England is the minister of a parish, as distinguished from the bishop, the minister of the diocese. The minister, then, of the second order, who is supposed to come into immediate and daily contact with the flock of Christ, is furnished with this commission of absolution.

The fact of the commission to absolve being given to the second order rather than to the first, appears to me to refute the idea that the power of remitting or retaining sins has to do with the retention or removal of Church censures; for if so, it would be given to that officer (the bishop) by whose authority alone these censures are pronounced.[1]

The priest ordained after this form is furnished, in the office for the "Visitation of the Sick," with a formula, according to which he is to exercise it.

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[1] It is impossible to believe that the very comprehensive and general terms of this absolution refer to the removal of Church censures. The loosing men from such censures may be of course included, but there is not one word said about such a thing in the Visitation Service, which there must have been if such a view of absolution was the principal one taken by the compilers of the service, especially as the old form which this one superseded contained the words, "And I restore thee to the Sacraments of the Church" (et Sacramentis ecclesiæ te restituo). There is no word respecting Church censures in the commission in John xx. 20.

I cannot see that any difficulty is removed by this theory; for if our Lord merely referred to the removal of church censures, then excommunication must be a power of the most tremendous character, or the removal of its ban would not form the subject of such words said on such an occasion.

The priest is there directed to absolve the sick man in the words:—

"Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to His Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in Him, of His great mercy forgive thee thine offences; and by His authority committed unto me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Here we have the power which the Saviour gave to the first ministers of the New Covenant recognised and claimed by the Church.

In the wording of this absolution the Church very carefully guards the due exercise of this power.

First. Against presumption on the part of the person absolved.

Secondly. Against assumption on the part of the absolver.

First. She guards this power against presumption on the part of the absolved, if he presumes that he can have absolution without the exercise of repentance and faith on his part; for the application of this power is, in the very words of the absolution itself, expressly limited to those who repent and believe in Jesus Christ.

Secondly. She guards the right exercise of this power against assumption on the part of the absolver,[1] lest he should take to himself the glory; for the absolver has to absolve in the words, "By His authority committed unto me, I absolve thee."

[1] I cannot, however, help thinking that the very careful annunciation on the part of the Church that this power is only delegated, subordinate, and conditional, is aimed not so much at some imaginary assumptions on the part of imaginary priests, who are supposed to arrogate to themselves the power to pardon on their own authority, but to stop, if possible, the mouths of adversaries who ask with the avowed enemies of Christ, Who is this that speaketh blasphemies?

No less than four times in the few short lines composing this absolution is all power and authority to absolve referred to God as its Author, and Giver, and Controller.

First. When it is said, "Our Lord Jesus Christ hath left power in His Church."

Secondly. When the priest is directed to pray Christ Himself to absolve: "Of His great mercy forgive thee thine offences."

Thirdly. When the priest actually absolves, there is another recognition of the one fountain of authority. "By His authority committed unto me, I absolve thee."

Fourthly. All is done in the name of the Trinity: "I absolve thee [not in my own name, but] in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

The Church could not have done more to guard this commission of Christ from abuse, whilst she is careful to honour her Divine Head by accepting His words in their plain, natural sense.

Any form of Absolution which honours these words of Christ by not taking from them, as well as by not adding to them, must contain the three words, "I absolve thee."

No prayer that the person may be absolved by God, as the Absolution in Holy Communion, satisfies these words of Christ.

No declaration of the Gospel that God absolves for Christ's sake, satisfies these words of Christ. His words are more than "Whatsoever sinners ye pray for, they shall be forgiven." They are more than "Whatsoever sinners ye proclaim the Gospel to, if they believe, they shall be forgiven."

His words are, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them."

Any alteration or emendation of this absolution which

would suit the rationalizing or democratic tendencies of the present day, would leave these words of Christ without anything answering to them in the Prayer-book.

Worse than this, it would be a deliberate casting aside, or an attempt by the use of ambiguous expressions to evade the assertion, of a commission once recognised.

Is it not probable that in an age like this we may have on such a matter to choose between the world and Christ?

NOTE.—This absolution is not merely declaratory. It must in some sense convey what it declares. The words of Christ are too strong for a merely declaratory absolution.

We must seek some solution which, whilst it jealously reserves all ultimate power of forgiveness to God, yet at the same time leaves room for some *bonâ fide* exercise of this power which Christ has left, and so vindicates His wisdom in having used words which (on the Anti-absolution hypothesis) are so much stronger than was needful.

It appears to me that the conveyance of pardon in Absolution is analogous to the mode of its conveyance in Baptism.

If we look to His "purpose according to Election," God may have pardoned the penitent from all eternity.

If we look to God's secret will, He may pardon the same man at the moment when he first believes.

But still there must be room for the declared purpose of God (Mark xvi. 16; Acts ii. 38, xxii. 16; Ephes. v. 26) to convey this secret pardon to the unbaptized at the moment when he is engrafted into that mystical body to which the promise of pardon belongs.

And so with absolution. The words of the absolving minister may restore the penitent to the secret unity or fellowship of that Body from which he may be severed by many sins to which formal Church censures do not reach.

But let us remember that an inability to give an exact theory of the conveyance of pardon in absolution can be no excuse for our refusing to take into *real* account such plain words of Christ.

NOTES ON CHAPTER V.

THE following extracts from W. Law's "Three Letters to the Bishop of Bangor," admirably expose some ever-recurring fallacies on this subject :—

"Your Lordship tells us, we need not trouble our heads about any particular sort of clergy; that all is to be transacted betwixt God and ourselves; that human benedictions are insignificant trifles.

"But pray what proof has your Lordship for all this? Have you any Scripture for it? Has God anywhere declared that no men on earth have any authority to bless in His name? Has He anywhere said that it is a wicked presumptuous thing for any one to pretend to it? Has He anywhere told us that it is inconsistent with His honour to bestow His graces by *human hands?* Has He anywhere told us, that He has no ministers, no ambassadors on earth; but that all His gifts and graces are to be received immediately from His own hands? Have you any antiquity, fathers, or councils, on your side? No,—the whole tenor of Scripture, the whole current of tradition, is against you. Your novel doctrine has only this to recommend it to the libertines of the age, who universally give in to it, that it never was the opinion of any Church or Churchman. It is your Lordship's proper assertion, *that we offend God in expecting His graces from any* hands but His own.

"Now it is strange, that God should be offended with His own methods, or that your Lordship should find us out a way of pleasing Him, more suitable to His nature and attributes than what He has taught us in the Scriptures. I call them His own methods, for what else is the whole Jewish dispensation but a method of God's providence, where His blessings and judgments were dispensed by *human hands?* What is the Christian religion but a method of salvation where the chief means of grace are offered and dispensed by human hands? . . . 2d Letter, pp. 12, 13.

"There is a superstitious custom (in your Lordship's account it must be so) yet remaining in most cases, of sending for a clergyman to minister to sick persons in imminent danger of death. Even those who have abused the clergy all their lives long, are glad to beg their assistance when they apprehend themselves upon the confines of another world. There is no reason, my Lord, to dislike this practice, but as it supposes a difference between the Sacerdotal prayers and benedictions, and those of a nurse.

"We read, my Lord, that God would not heal Abimelech, *though He knew the integrity of his heart*, till Abraham had prayed for him: 'He is a prophet,' said God, 'he shall pray for thee and thou shalt live.' (Gen. xx. 7.) Pray, my Lord, was not God as just, and good, and true, in the days of Abraham, as He is now? Yet, you see, Abimelech's integrity was not available (by) itself. He was to be pardoned by the prayer of Abraham, and his prayer was effectual; and so represented because it was the prayer of a prophet. . . .

"We read, also, that Joshua was full of the Spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands upon him. (Deut. xxxiv. 9.) Was it not as absurd, my Lord, in the days of Joshua, for human hands to bless as it is now? Did there not then lie the same objection against Moses that there does now against the Christian clergy? Had Moses any more *natural* power to give the Spirit of wisdom, &c. by his hands, than the clergy have to convey grace by theirs? They are both equally weak and insufficient for these purposes of themselves, and equally powerful when it pleases God to make them so.

"Again, when Eliphaz and his friends had displeased God, they were not to be reconciled to God by their own repentance, or transact that matter only between God and themselves, but they were referred to apply to Job. 'My servant Job shall pray for you, for him will I accept.' (Job. xlii. 8.) Might not Eliphaz here have said, Shall I so far affront God as to think I cannot be blessed without the prayers of Job? Shall I be so weak and senseless as to imagine my own supplications and repentance will not save me, or that I need apply to any one but God alone to qualify me for the reception of His grace!

"From the places of Scripture above mentioned, it is evident, and indeed from the whole tenor of Holy Writ, that it may consist with the goodness and justice of God, to depute men to act in His name, and be ministerial towards the salvation of others: and to

lay a necessity upon His creatures of qualifying themselves for His favour, and receiving His graces by the hands and intervention of mere men. . . ." 2d Letter, pp. 16, 17.

"It will not follow from anything I have said, that the Laity have lost their Christian liberty, or that nobody can be saved but whom the clergy please to save; that they have the arbitrary disposal of happiness to mankind. Was Abimelech's happiness in the disposition of Abraham, because he was to be received by means of Abraham's intercession? Or could Job damn Eliphaz, because he was to mediate for him, and procure his reconciliation to God?

"Neither, my Lord, do the Christian clergy pretend to this despotic empire over their flocks. They do not assume to themselves a power to damn the innocent or to save the guilty; but they assert a sober and just right to reconcile men to God (2 Cor. v. 18, 19), and to act in His name in restoring them to His favour. They received their commission from those whom Christ sent, with full authority to send others, and with a promise that He would be with them to the end of the world." 2d Letter, pp. 17, 18.

"To what purpose does your Lordship except against these powers in the clergy, from their common frailties and infirmities with the rest of mankind? Were not Abraham and Job, and the Jewish priests, men of like passions with us? Did not our Saviour command the Jews to apply to their priests, notwithstanding their personal faults, because they sat in Moses' chair? Did not the Apostles assure their followers that they were men of like passions with them? But did they, therefore, disclaim their mission, or Apostolical authority? Did they teach that their natural infirmities made them less the ministers of God, or less necessary to the salvation of men? Their personal defects did not make them depart from the claim of those powers they were invested with, or desert their ministry; but, indeed, gave St. Paul occasion to say, 'We have this treasure in earthen vessels (*i.e.* this authority committed to mere men) that the excellency of it may be of God, and not of men.'

"The Apostle happens to differ very much from your Lordship: he says that such weak instruments were made use of that the glory might redound to God. Your Lordship says, 'to suppose

instruments to be of any benefit to us is to lessen the sovereignty of God, and, in consequence, His glory.'

"Your Lordship imagines you have sufficiently destroyed the Sacerdotal powers by shewing that the clergy are only men, and subject to the common frailties of mankind. My Lord, we own the charge, and do not claim any Sacerdotal powers from our personal abilities, or to acquire any glory to ourselves. But, weak as we are, we are God's ministers, AND IF WE ARE EITHER AFRAID OR ASHAMED OF OUR DUTY, WE MUST PERISH IN THE GUILT. But is a prophet therefore proud, because he insists upon the authority of his mission? Cannot a mortal be God's messenger, and employed in his affairs, but he must be insolent and assuming, for having the resolution to own it? If we are to be reproved for pretending to be God's ministers, because we are but men, the reproach will fall upon Providence, since it has pleased God chiefly to transact His affairs with mankind by the ministry of their brethren.

"Your Lordship has not one word from Scripture against these Sacerdotal powers; no proof that Christ has not sent men to be effectual administrators of His graces: you only assert that there can be no such ministers, because they are mere men.

"Now, my Lord, I must beg leave to say that if the natural weakness of men makes them incapable of being the instruments of conveying grace to their brethren; if the clergy cannot be of any use or necessity to their flocks, for this reason, then it undeniably follows that there can be no *positive institutions* in the Christian religion that can procure any spiritual advantages to the members of it; then the Sacraments can be no longer any means of grace. For I hope that no one thinks that bread and wine have any natural force or efficacy to convey grace to the soul. The water in Baptism has the common qualities of water, and is destitute of any intrinsic power to cleanse the soul or purify from sin. But your Lordship will not say, because it has only the common nature of water, that therefore *it cannot be a means of grace.* Why then may not the clergy, though they have the common nature of men, be constituted by God to convey His graces, and to be ministerial to the salvation of their brethren? Can God consecrate inanimate things to spiritual purposes, and make them the means of eternal happiness? and is man the only creature that He cannot make subservient to His designs? the only being who is too weak for an

Omnipotent God, to render effectual towards attaining the ends of His grace?

"And now, my Lord, let the common sense of mankind here judge whether, if the clergy are to be esteemed as having no authority, because they are but men, it does not plainly follow that everything else, every institution that has not some *natural* force and power to produce the effects designed by it, is not also to be rejected as equally trifling and ineffectual.

"The sum of the matter is this: It appears from many express facts; and, indeed, from the whole series of God's providence, that it is not only consistent with His attributes, but also agreeable to His ordinary methods of dealing with mankind, that He should substitute men to act in His name, and be authoritatively employed in conferring His graces and favours upon mankind." Pp. 21, 22.

"Your Lordship's argument is this: Christians have their sins pardoned upon certain conditions; but fallible men cannot certainly know these conditions; therefore fallible men cannot have authority to absolve.

"From hence I take occasion to argue thus: Persons are to be admitted to the Sacraments on certain conditions, but fallible men cannot tell whether they come qualified to receive them according to these conditions; therefore fallible men cannot have authority to administer the Sacraments. Secondly: This argument subverts all authority of the Christian religion itself, and the reason of every instituted means of grace. For if nothing can be authoritative but what a man is infallibly assured of, then the Christian religion cannot be an authoritative method of salvation; since a man by being a Christian does not become infallibly certain of his salvation: nor does grace infallibly attend the participation of the Sacraments. So that though your Lordship has formed this argument only against this absolving power, yet it has as much force against the Sacraments, and the Christian religion itself. For if it be absurd to suppose that the priest should absolve any one, because he cannot be certain that he deserves absolution; does it not imply the same absurdity to suppose that he should have the power of administering the Sacraments, when he cannot be infallibly certain that those who receive them are duly qualified? If a possibility of error destroys the power in one case, it certainly destroys it in the other.

"Again, if absolution cannot be authoritative unless it be infallible,

then it is plain that the Christian religion is not an authoritative means of salvation, because all Christians are not infallibly saved: nor can the Sacraments be authoritative means of grace, because all who partake of them do not infallibly obtain grace." 2d Letter, p. 33.

In answer to the Bishop's insinuations that "Churchmen make the absolution of weak and fallible men so necessary that God will not pardon without them," Law answers—

"Who ever taught such a necessity of absolutions, that God will pardon none without them? Who ever declared that all are pardoned who have them pronounced over them? We teach the necessity and validity of Sacraments; but do we ever declare that all are saved who receive them? Is there no medium between two extremes? No such thing, my Lord, as *moderation!* Must everything be thus absolute and extravagant, or nothing at all?" P. 35.

The Bishop had pronounced that "absolution supposes God to place a set of men above Himself, and to put out of His own hands the disposal of His blessings and curses."

"If your Lordship had employed all this oratory against worshipping the sun and moon, it had just affected your adversaries as much as this. For whoever taught that any set of men could *absolutely* bless or withhold blessing independent of God? Whoever taught that the Christian religion, or Sacraments, or absolution saved people on course, without proper dispositions? Whoever claimed such an absolving power, as to set himself above God, and to take from Him the disposal of His own blessings and curses? What have such extravagant descriptions, such romantick characters of absolution to do with that power which the clergy justly claim? Cannot there be a necessity in some cases of receiving absolution from their hands except they set themselves above God? Is God robbed of the disposal of His blessings, when, *in obedience to His own commands, and in virtue of His own authority*, they admit some men as members of the Church, and exclude others from the communion of it? Do they pretend to be channels of grace, or the

means of pardon, by any rights or powers naturally inherent in them? Do they not in all these things consider themselves as instruments of God, that are made ministerial to the edification of His Church purely by His will, and only so far as they act in conformity to it? Now, if it has pleased God to confer the Holy Ghost in ordination, confirmation, &c. only by them, and to annex the grace of pardon to the imposition of their hands, on returning sinners: is it any blasphemy for them to claim and exert their power? *Is the prerogative of God injured because His own institutions are obeyed? Cannot He dispense His graces by what persons and on what terms He pleases?*

"Is He deprived of the disposal of His blessings because they are bestowed on persons according to His order, and in obedience to His authority?" . . . Pp. 36, 37.

I would put it to any Evangelical clergymen into whose hands this book may fall, whether the above extracts are in reality one whit stronger than the following, taken from the remains of one whom they consider to have been God's great instrument for bringing about a revival of religion in the present century.

"In pronouncing the benediction, I do not do it as a *finale*, but I feel that I am actually dispensing peace from God, and by God's command. Remember the force of such passages as these:—'We pray you in Christ's stead' (2 Cor. v. 20). 'Let a man account of us as the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God' (1 Cor. iv. 1). Men should think of us as speaking 'as the oracles of God' (1 Pet. iv. 11). It is not the priest, but the priestly office, that performs Divine service. Hence, as indeed our Church declares, when the priest happens individually to be a sinful man, he still does not defile the bread and wine which he administers in the Lord's Supper (Art. xxvi)."—From Notes of Conversations of Rev. C. Simeon, edited by Rev. A. Brown.

CHAPTER VI.

FORMS OF PRAYER AND THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE PEOPLE.

It will be needful now to consider what warrant we have from Scripture for the use of a Liturgy in the public service of the Church. It is a singular thing that we should have ever been called upon to defend our practice in this matter, for it simply amounts to this, we have to defend our practice of having Common Prayer.

The title of the Prayer-book is "The Book of Common Prayer;" that is, prayer *common to*, or belonging to, the whole Church as the Body of Christ, and to each congregation as a part of that Body, and this as distinguished from the private prayer of the individual minister.

By far the greater part of those who speak the English language, and who are not in communion with the English Church, consider that forms of prayer, such as ours, are unlawful, or at least inexpedient, for public worship.

They, consequently, require the minister who conducts the service of God in their respective places of worship to offer up to God in their hearing his own private devotions.

Of course, the person who has this duty to perform, will speak in the name of all, and ask for things which all have need of; but still, what he puts up to God will be his own, though it may be, to a certain extent, silently adopted by the congregation. Both thoughts and words are assumed to be his own—assumed indeed to be the unpremeditated effusion of his own mind at the moment, for it is supposed to be extempore. Every sentence must

reflect his own individuality, and be tinctured with his own views.

Such a system may have advantages, but it is certainly very singular that amongst these Christian liberty should have been reckoned as one; for in the matter of the united intercourse of the assembled Church of Christ with its Head, the congregation, if this plan be adopted, are delivered up, as it were, into the hands of one man. Those who would execrate the idea of a fellow-creature *thinking* for them, depute him to *pray* for them; for, in their approaches to God as His Church, not only do they make an individual their mouth-piece to offer up prayers, but they actually offer up what are, to all intents and purposes, his, and only his. So far, then, as regards Christian liberty, it all belongs to the minister; for, as has been well said with reference to giving our own ministers more latitude, "The liberty of the minister is the slavery of the people."

Of course, I need hardly say, that the service of the Catholic Church, and of every branch of it, from the very first, has been the opposite to all this.

To speak for our branch, not only is every word of the service known beforehand, so that it is the common property of all—for all know what prayers and praises are to be offered up, and all by their presence, deportment, and response, are supposed to concur—but opportunities are given at every turn for the congregation to assert their right as "priests of God," to take actual audible part in the service.

They offer up the General Confession, and the Lord's Prayer, whenever it occurs, with the minister. They confess the Creeds jointly with the minister. They take their share in the daily Psalms by offering up each alternate verse. In cathedrals and places where the Psalms

are chanted antiphonally, this part of God's worship is put up solely by the congregation or laity. So also it is in almost all Churches with such exalted acts of praise as the "Te Deum," "Magnificat," and "Benedictus."

The Litany is thrown into its present form in order to give as much opportunity as possible for response on the part of the assembled worshippers.

The use of short collects rather than long prayers affords more frequent occasions for the congregation to join in by solemn "Amen," for there is not a prayer throughout the service which takes up more time than one minute to read slowly and reverently.

The very commandments seem to be read chiefly with a view of eliciting the response after each, if we may judge from the tenor of the rubric which precedes them.[1]

Above all, it is the congregation rather than the minister who offer up the most sacred sacrifices of praise in the whole book, viz. the "Tersanctus," or "Triumphal Hymn," in Holy Communion, and the "Gloria in Excelsis," in the same service; for before each of these acts of praise there is a rubric directing that it should be "said or sung;" this rubric being, in fact, exactly similar to those which authorize us to surrender the Te Deum or Psalms to the whole body of worshippers.

So that the Prayer-book is, in the strictest sense, what it professes to be—The Book of COMMON Prayer; both because it is the *common* expression of the devotion, not of an individual, but of the Church; and also because by

[1] "Then shall the priest, turning to the people, rehearse distinctly all the Ten Commandments; and the people still kneeling shall, after every commandment, ask God's mercy for their transgressions thereof for the time past, and grace to keep the same for the time *to come.*"

response or repetition after the minister, the Church is assumed to use it *in common.*

Before examining the Scripture testimony which bears upon this matter, I would remark that the whole dispute about it seems to me to be put on a wrong footing, when it is represented as a question concerning the propriety of using *extempore* instead of *preconceived* forms of devotion. It is not a question between extempore prayer and *any* preconceived form, but between the devotional effusion of any individual you please, and that form or edition, so to speak, of the Liturgy of Christ's Holy Catholic Church which is used by our branch of it.

If I had to take my choice between the extempore prayers of some fervent though mistaken Christian, and the long dull form which I have heard read in the assemblies of some Continental Protestants, in which several pages of continuous printed matter are gone through without animation or even change of voice, I should be tempted to say, Give me the extempore prayer. But the real question at issue amounts to this,—Is the Christian assembly right, in procuring an individual to supply the words and thoughts of United or Church intercourse with God; or is the same body right in having adopted for the use of its members a certain form of Divine service, the greater part of which is in the very words of Scripture, and which is entirely their own, because previously assented to by them, and which, as far as is consistent with order and decency, they put up audibly themselves?

The case in Scripture stands thus:—We have, in the first place, an inspired *Prayer*-book, forming one of the books of the Bible, and that is "the book of Psalms."

In the other Scriptures God speaks to us. In the book of Psalms He gives us words in which to speak to Him. Of this there can be no doubt. All Christians have, with

one consent, agreed to use the Psalms in some shape or other as devotional forms.

The Jews used them in the Temple service (2 Chron. xxix. 30). They formed a part of that Synagogue service in which our Lord so often joined.

The Catholic Church has from the first adopted them as a chief part of her daily service, and has so used them without omission or alteration. All the Protestant bodies of the Reformation period adapted them to their worship by turning them into the form of metrical rhyme.

God, then, has decided that forms of prayer are lawful, for He has provided us with a book of such forms, which book has always constituted in itself a very large part of the devotional utterances of His Church.

So far also as regards the New Testament, the question of forms of prayer was taken up and settled by our Lord Himself. He was asked by His disciples for a form in the words "Lord teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." In answer to this request He gave them one—"When ye pray say, Our Father which art in heaven." By this he disposed of the question of the expediency of forms, for if they had been inexpedient He would have plainly told them that He could teach them no form of words; that such a thing would only cramp the freedom of their intercourse with God; that he would in due time pour His Spirit upon them, and then they would have no need of forms, for the Spirit would enlarge their desires and unloose their tongues, so that *any* form whatsoever, that even He could give them, would be a hindrance to them.

If forms had been unlawful, or even inexpedient, the Lord would certainly have said something like this to those who asked Him to teach them to pray.

But, instead of this, He gives to them a form of words, *to the height* of which the spirit of man has never

attained, and to the depth of which the spirit of man has never yet penetrated.

A form, of course, may be used as a mere matter of form, just as an extempore prayer may be made the vehicle of anger, wrath, and blasphemy; but there are forms to the full spirit of which the soul of man here on earth can scarcely hope to rise; such is the prayer that Christ taught, and such is the simplest of all forms, the angelic hymn, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts." What tainted soul can ever hope to rise to these words as the pure spirits do, from whom we have learnt them?

We have no specific directions in the Acts or in the Apostolical Epistles respecting the conduct of public worship.

Stated meetings of Christians for joint prayer and praise, as I have shown on page 169, are not alluded to more than six times throughout the whole of the New Testament, and from three or four of these notices we gather that the chief object for which these assemblies came together was the celebration of the Eucharist.

The conduct of public worship is, in fact, in the same position as the keeping of the Lord's Day, respecting which we have not a hint in the New Testament.

But what is the inference which we are to draw from the fact that the order of public worship is nowhere laid down in the New Testament? An inference of the most preposterous character has been gravely drawn from it by the great majority of English Ultra-Protestants, viz. that because we have no particular directions laid down, therefore each assembly of Christians is to commit its public intercourse with God to one man, so as to adopt his thoughts as their thoughts, and his words as their words, when they come together as a Church to worship God.

Such must of necessity be the case if no forms are allowed. Forms are essential if the congregation are to take any orderly part in public worship beyond the repetition of the single word "Amen" at the end of prayers.

The various Ultra-Protestant bodies of this kingdom and America who reject the use of Liturgies, are obliged to adopt forms to enable their congregations to join in the singing; for what is a hymn but a form of words? A metrical hymn, too, must be, from its very nature, in a certain sense, more formal, because cast into the "form" of rhyme.[1]

To return. Did, then, the Apostles debar Christian congregations from the use of forms, so compelling them to adopt the devotions of one man as their own, and so to forego taking any part themselves in the service?

Certainly not.

The evidence of all Christian antiquity on the subject of ancient Liturgies puts it beyond all doubt that the

[1] The Presbyterian bodies in connexion with the Scotch Establishment go farther still. The only part of the service in which the congregation are permitted to join is the singing, and in this they have rigidly restricted themselves to the Psalms; so if there is any "formality" in the use of them in public worship, these bodies have doubled such formality by casting the Psalms into the form of rhyming couplets.

Let it be, however, freely confessed that in this matter of metrical Psalms, the Church of England has descended to a level miserably below that of any other body. It seems a just Nemesis for a Church, of whose services the Psalter forms the chief part, and whose theory is that the Psalter should be chanted as of old, to have been given up to Sternhold and Hopkins, and then to have sunk so low as to permit the use of Brady and Tate in her sanctuaries, and this because she virtually left the ancient use of the Psalter to a few hirelings in her cathedrals, and because, too, having recognised the use of ancient hymns in her ordinal, she has taken no pains as a Church to get them rendered into decent English verse suitable to congregational singing.

Apostles themselves ordained the use of certain forms in the service for the administration of Holy Communion, which both Scripture and antiquity unite in testifying to have been the leading service of the Church when gathered together on the Lord's Day.

By these forms the lay people, as priests of God, were enabled to co-operate in the most sacred parts of their most sacred service.

There are now in existence (and some of them have been translated and published),[1] a considerable number

[1] The reader will find the anaphoræ or more sacred parts of ten of these Liturgies translated by Dr. Brett, in his collection of Primitive Liturgies.

Mr. Neale has also translated the whole of five, viz. those of St. Mark, St. James, the Clementine, St. Chrysostom, and Malabar, in a small volume (published by Hayes, Lyall Place, Eaton Square), but the fullest information for the English reader will be found in Neale's "History of the Holy Eastern Church:" General Introduction, pages 380—710. Here the anaphoræ of eight (viz. St. Chrysostom, Armenian, St. James, St. Basil, St. Mark, Coptic St. Basil, Mozarabic and Theodore the Interpreter) are tabulated, so that he will be able to compare at a glance the corresponding parts of each.

The anaphora of one of the oldest of all, viz. the "Apostles," is not given by Neale, for, I think, a very insufficient reason. The reader will find it translated in Etheridge's "Syrian Churches, their Early History, Liturgies, and Literature," page 221 (London: Longmans).

The reader will find much information in the first volume of Palmer's "Origines Liturgicæ." I confess, however, that when I read this book as a student, his observations were all but unintelligible, simply because he gives no example of a Liturgy. Much information also on this subject, of a popular character, is to be found in Bates' Lectures on Christian Antiquities and the Ritual of the English Church. (London: J. W. Parker). Pages 158—161.

The reader will also find the Mozarabic Liturgy discussed in a review by (I believe) Mr. Neale in the *Christian Remembrancer* for October, 1853. This is, or ought to be, the most interesting of

of Liturgies, which have been in use from the remotest periods in Churches scattered over all parts of the world.

The use of these documents reaches to a time when there was no central ecclesiastical authority recognised all over Christendom—such as the Pope—to recommend to distant Churches the adoption of any form used by his own Church, and when there was no union of Church and State to compel obedience to any ritual.

These liturgies, whilst in some respects differing from one another very widely, all agree in certain remarkable features. They all contain particular forms of words, which are in substance the same, and the most noticeable of these are forms which the people either use wholly, or in which they take their part along with the celebrant by response.

I have given above (page 187) the hymn of the Seraphim as it is embodied in six Liturgies used in all parts of the ancient world.

I would now particularly draw the reader's attention to the fact, that the hymn itself, though always prefaced by words used by the priest, is invariably sung or said by the people.

In the Clementine Liturgy there is a specific direction, "And let all the people say with them (*i.e.* with the angels), Holy, Holy, Holy," &c.

all to us, as it, in all probability, contains the substance of the Communion service used in this country before Augustine and the missionaries from Rome superseded it by the Roman. The writer shows that the groundwork of the Mozarabic is coeval with the introduction of Christianity into Spain; that it cannot be derived from the Roman or Eastern rites, that it is closely allied with the Gallican, and he pronounces it to be "the richest, the fullest, the most varied of all known Liturgies."

In all the ancient Liturgies (as translated by Brett and Neale) there is a rubric directing that this hymn of praise should be said by the choir or people. In the Liturgy of St. Mark the priest says a fuller or rather longer form, and the people respond with the shorter "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord."

In Brett's translation of the Mozarabic, which is an independent rite, and, according to Neale, represents the ancient Celtic Liturgy, we have a direction, "Let the chorus answer, Holy, Holy, Holy," &c.

The Seraphic Hymn, then, is a form put up peculiarly by the people.

Again, all the more sacred parts of these Liturgies begin with forms of words similar to those in our Liturgy, in which the priest calls upon the people to "lift up their hearts," and the people respond.

These forms slightly differ, but are all substantially the same.

I give four examples of this form.

From the Liturgy of St. James—

"The love of the Lord and Father, the grace of the Lord and Son, the communion and gift of the Holy Ghost, be with us all.

"*People.*—And with thy spirit.

"*Priest.*—Lift we up our mind and our hearts.

"*People.*—It is meet and right.

"*Priest.*—It is verily meet and right, fitting and due, &c. to praise Thee," &c.

From the Liturgy of St. Mark, used in Egypt—

"The Lord be with all.

"*People.*—And with thy spirit.

"*Priest.*—Lift we up our hearts.

"*People.*—We lift them up unto the Lord.

"*Priest.*—Let us give thanks unto the Lord.

"*People.*—It is meet and right.

"*Priest.*—It is verily meet and right, holy and becoming, and advantageous to our souls," &c.

From the Liturgy of Mesopotamia and Malabar, representing the form prevailing in the furthest East.

"*Priest.*—Lift up your minds.

"*People.*—They are lifted up to Thee, O God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel, the King of glory.

"*Priest.*—Let an oblation be offered unto God the Lord of all.

"*People.*—It is meet and right."

From the Mozarabic, representing the ancient Liturgies of Spain and Gaul before the Roman was forced upon them.

"*Priest.*—Your ears to the Lord.

"*People.*—We raise them to the Lord.

"*Priest.*—Lift up your hearts.

"*People.*—We lift them up unto the Lord.

"*Priest.*—To our Lord and God Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who is in the heavens, let us render worthy praise and worthy thanks.

"*People.*—It is meet and right."

It is not my intention here to enter at large into the subject of ancient Liturgies, the very many points in which they agree, and the many points in which they differ. I must restrict myself to bringing before the reader certain features, in which they all agree in giving the congregations opportunity to take part in the most sacred portions of the service. I have already noticed two; the responses at the commencement of the more sacred part, and the Seraphic Hymn. I will notice two more.

All the Liturgies agree in reciting the words used by our Lord as the form of consecration, but in no case adhering strictly to any one of the four accounts given in the Evangelists; sometimes adding to one account what is taken from another; most of them amplifying. Now here, in almost every Liturgy, we find a rubric, or specific direction to the people to say, "Amen." In some cases, a distinct response is provided for them, but in all cases they are supposed to take part in this most sacred portion of the service. Thus, in the Liturgy of St. Mark, they simply respond "Amen," while in the equally ancient

Liturgy of St. James, after the consecration of the cup, they take their part by a very significant response, which I give:—

"*Priest.*—This is My blood of the New Testament which is shed and given for you and for many for the remission of sins.

"*The People.*—Amen.

"*The Priest.*—Do this in remembrance of Me, for as oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the death of the Son of man, and confess His resurrection till His coming again.

"*The People.*—O Lord, we shew forth Thy death, and confess Thy resurrection."

In the Armenian Liturgy, there are three responses for the people. One, at the commencement of the words of institution, is simply "We believe." The second, is "Amen," after the recital of our Lord's words respecting the bread. A third, is after the words of Christ respecting the cup, and it is very touching:—

"*Priest.*—This is My blood of the New Testament, which for you and for many is shed for the remission and pardon of sins.

"*People.*—O heavenly Father, who didst give up Thy Son to death, as the debtor of our debts, we beseech Thee, for the sake of His blood, which hath been shed, to have mercy upon Thy rational flock."

In the Ethiopic (as given by Brett) the people respond, "Amen, Amen, Amen! We believe and are sure; we praise Thee, O Lord our God: this is truly Thy body, and so we believe."

And after the cup—

"This is truly Thy blood, and we believe it."

The opportunities given for response in this most solemn part of the service are particularly to be noticed.

A great principle seems to be asserted in them,—no less than the priesthood (in its due place) of the whole flock of Christ.

Mr. Neale, in his "Translation of Primitive Liturgies," gives in full the words of institution as they are read in no less than fifty of these venerable documents.

It is to be noted that in all the Eastern ones, and in the Mozarabic, directions are given for at least two distinct responses, one after the words relating to the bread, the other after those relating to the cup.

So that the principle of the priesthood of the whole flock of Christ—in that they have part given to them in the very consecration itself—is asserted in these documents more clearly than in our own reformed office, which gives opportunity for but one response in the shape of one "Amen," after the prayer of consecration.

I have room for but one more instance of a form in which all the congregation are called upon to bear their part.

In all or, at least, in a vast number of these Liturgies, the Lord's Prayer is preceded by a sort of preface, expressing particular unworthiness to say this prayer above all others, and asking for boldness and confidence in calling God "Our Father."

This prefatory prayer is said by the priest, and the people join in with the Lord's Prayer itself, which is said with their united voices.

The example I first give is from the Liturgy of St. James.

"And grant us Lord, and lover of men, with boldness, without condemnation, with a pure heart, with a broken spirit, with a face that needeth not to be ashamed, with hallowed lips, to dare to call upon Thee, our holy God and Father in the heavens, and to say—

"*People.*—Our Father," &c.

I give two other examples.

From the Liturgy of St. Mark—

"And sanctify us wholly, soul, body, and spirit, that with Thy holy disciples and Apostles we may say to Thee this prayer,—Our Father, &c. And make us worthy, O Lord and Lover of men, with *boldness*, without condemnation, with a pure heart, with an en-

lightened soul, with a countenance that needeth not to be ashamed, with hallowed lips, to dare to call upon Thee, our holy God and Father, and to say—

"*People.*—Our Father," &c.

From the ancient Mesopotamian Liturgy of all Apostles, with which agrees, *verbatim*, the Malabar.

"Forgive, O Lord, by Thy clemency, the sins and transgressions of Thy servants, and sanctify our lips by Thy grace, that they may give the fruit of praise and thanksgiving to Thy Godhead, with all Thy Saints in Thy kingdom. And make us worthy, O Lord God, that without spot we may ever stand before Thee, with pure heart and open face, and with confidence towards Thee mercifully given to us. So will we TOGETHER call upon Thee, saying,—Our Father," &c.

Let us now sum up how matters stand respecting these primitive Liturgies. We have cited them, not merely as testifying to the use of forms, but to the use of certain forms which enable the people to join prominently and audibly in the most sacred parts of the service.

The New Testament writers have left no directions whatsoever respecting public prayers. The only thing which we learn from the New Testament is, that the leading act of Christian assemblies was the "breaking of bread." But it is the height of absurdity to infer that because there are no specific directions in the New Testament, therefore the apostles ordained that the presiding minister of each congregation should have all the public devotions of the Church so made over to him, that his own thoughts and words should become the sole public prayers of the people, and be their sole mode of public access to God. Before we can allow that such a thing is according to the Divine will, we must be shown a distinct command for it, for it bears extreme improbability on the face of it.

If there is to be "common" prayer, there must be forms in order that the congregation may know what they

are going to ask for; and furthermore, if the congregations are to take a part in the service of God, at all suitable to their high vocation as "priests of God," these forms must be of that responsive character which we observe in the ancient Liturgies, and with which we are familiar through using our own Liturgy. Well, we have certain documents called Liturgies—the very word "Liturgy" signifying a service belonging to the people—all Communion offices—the use of which reaches to the remotest antiquity, in lands as far apart as Malabar and Spain, Gaul and Abyssinia, Armenia and Milan.

These Liturgies contain certain forms of prayer and praise which are alike, both in the words used, and in the fact that particular opportunity is given for the whole congregation to take part in them.

Who ordered the use of these forms? The most ancient are ascribed to Apostles, or Apostolic men. Of this we may be certain, that no name in the Universal Church of Christ, from the times of the Apostles to the full establishment of the Papacy,[1] has had sufficient weight to induce all Christendom, from Spain to Malabar, to begin their Communion services with certain words, to which the people all the world over give the same response, and besides this, cause them universally to adopt as their own the Hymn of the Seraphim, and also to recite the words of our Lord when He instituted the Eucharist, and also to ordain that every Liturgy (except the Roman) should have a specific direction in this place to the people to respond, and also that all should recite the Lord's Prayer,

[1] And not even then, for the power of the Court of Rome was only established over Western Europe. As late as the year 600 the Pope who sent Augustine to convert our Saxon ancestors, was careful not to impose the whole Roman Liturgy on his converts, but bid him choose from other existing rites, as the Gallican, what *seemed likely to* edify.

but not without a preparatory prayer for boldness, or, in other words, for the Spirit of adoption, to say "Abba, Father."

And these Liturgies agree yet further than this; for in seven or eight other matters do they all correspond with one another, as has been shown in such a well-known book as Palmer's "Origines Liturgicæ."

Now, since the Apostles passed to their rest, what Saint, or Patriarch, or Pope, or Emperor, could have had the power so to revolutionize the worship of all Christendom, as to induce Churches at opposite ends of the earth to substitute for a fancied primitive worship, in which all was left to the will of the one man who conducted the service, a totally different worship, which with every variety of detail in particular Liturgies still rigidly adhered to certain forms, and was characterised by certain very strongly marked features? These forms being such as to enable the people to take their part in the most solemn acts of Divine Service, these features being the very opposite of those which now characterise Ultra-Protestant worship.[1]

[1] Cyril of Jerusalem, in a series of Catechetical Lectures (delivered before the year 350 A.D.) comments on the Liturgy used in his time in Palestine, much in the same way as any clergyman of the present day would lecture on our Prayer-book. From his comments we gather that it had all the leading features of the Liturgy of St. James as it now exists, with one notable exception—the address to the Virgin Mary, which has evidently been foisted into it since Cyril's time.

Cyril expressly notices the "kiss of peace," the "lift up your hearts," the response to it—the "Holy, Holy, Holy," the invocation of the Holy Spirit upon the elements, the prayers answering to our prayer for the Church militant, the commemoration of the faithful departed, the Lord's Prayer and the introduction to it. the "Holy things for Holy persons," and the response to it.

The circumstances of time and place under which the Apostles met to institute these forms we know not—just as we know nothing whatsoever respecting the formation of the Canon of the New Testament. But if we dare apply the doctrine of chances to a matter so sacred, and add together the points in which these Liturgies agree, and take into consideration also the remoteness of the times to which their use in various Churches can be traced, and the distance of these various Churches from one another, and add to all this the fact that in those early times there was no attempt to impose the Liturgy of any one Church upon all;—if, I say, we give due weight to all these considerations,

All these Cyril mentions in the same order as that in which they occur in the extant copies of this Liturgy.

The Liturgy of St. Mark, used in Alexandria, contains all these features of the Liturgy of St. James, though arranged somewhat differently; all Liturgical writers agree in considering it a totally independent rite, in no way derived from the Liturgy of St. James.

Again, we have the fact that various bodies of heretics, such as the Nestorians, seceded from the Church in the century after this, the leaders of whom composed their own Liturgies, but in doing so carefully adhered to the prescribed model, and incorporated in these new Liturgies all the leading features of the old ones to which I have alluded, which they would not have done if they had not been satisfied that these features were of Apostolic origin.

The Gallican and Mozarabic (or Spanish) Liturgies differed essentially from the Roman, and were sister Liturgies. The framework of the Gallican seems to have been coeval with the introduction of the Gospel into Gaul from Asia Minor, and was superseded by the Roman in the time of Charlemagne. Manuscripts of the Gallican Liturgy have been discovered in Carlsruhe, which the learned editor (Mone) believes cannot possibly be of a later date than 305, and may be as early as 177 A.D.

The total absence of any prayer or petition in any of these Liturgies (except, of course, in the Roman) for the Bishop of Rome, is one of the strongest proofs which remote antiquity affords us of *the absurdity* of his pretensions to universal dominion.

we shall be forced to acknowledge that the chances are incalculable against any man since the times of the Apostles having been able to impose upon all Christendom that peculiar method of Divine service, of which we enjoy the substance in our "Order of the Administration of the Lord's Supper."

Unfortunately, the Post-Nicene Church, in all its branches, did not exhibit that jealousy respecting alteration in the words of public prayer, which has been (perhaps) carried to excess in the Church of England. Consequently, prayers were continually inserted which reflected the state of popular religious feeling; and as the current of that feeling set in strongly in favour of Mariolatry, we have some of these documents disfigured by addresses to the Virgin which are manifestly unprimitive.

I would now in conclusion briefly allude to another matter in which our Prayers, if they are to be accounted *Common* Prayers, must agree with Scripture.

Our Lord, in His Parables, gave us clearly to understand that His Church would not be a select assembly of spiritually-minded men and women, but a great, open, mixed body, including, [outwardly at least,] every form of moral character and every grade of spiritual advancement.

The Apostles, even in the first age, addressed the Churches as being of that very mixed character which their Lord had foretold.

There are in the Epistles many messages of the Spirit which seem above the reception of even the most spiritual, and there are many other messages which make us wonder that the Churches in that age should have needed such admonitions.

St. James, for instance, begins his Epistle with, "My

brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

I think few, very few, have attained to this, that they should in very deed count it ALL joy when God casts them into the furnace. And yet, see what things the same Apostle, in this same letter, deems it needful to say to his brethren: "Lay apart all filthiness, and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the ingrafted word." Again, "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." Again, "If ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth." Again, "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded."

St. Paul speaks to his Ephesian converts as "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise," "saved by grace through faith," and "made nigh by the blood of Christ," and yet this very Apostle, in this very letter, finds it needful to write to these persons such things as, "Putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour." "Let him that stole, steal no more." "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth." "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice" (Eph. iv. 28, 29, 31). "Be not ye therefore partakers with them," *i. e.* with fornicators, and unclean, and covetous persons, as the context shows (Eph. v. 3—7).

Such was the state of the members of the Primitive Church—some of them "full of goodness" (Rom. xv. 14). "Having Christ in them" (Coloss. i. 27, 28). Some not spiritual, but carnal (1 Cor. iii. 1). Some needing words of solemn warning against base and degrading sins.

Now, it is manifest that the COMMON Prayers of the

Church, if they are to be Scriptural, must descend as low as these Apostolic precepts.

The Common Prayers of the Catholic Church must not be pitched in the key of a sect or body whose profession is a profession of individual conversion, or individual spirituality. The Church must not assume that she is a coterie of "enlightened" people, all "saved" now, and all sure of being saved ultimately, and whom we should insult if we prayed that they might be delivered from disreputable sins.

This is the snare of all Evangelical bodies of Christians who commit their public prayers to one man, and demand, or look for, or encourage professions of spirituality, or unveilings of inward experience. Their ministers would be more than human if they could divest themselves of their consciousness of the presence of professors who are sitting in judgment upon the outward expressions of their (the ministers) intercourse with God.

Every petition, then, is adapted to a certain high spiritual tone which, from the things not prayed for, and therefore assumed not to be needed, must be incomparably purer and holier than was the spiritual atmosphere of the Ephesian, Colossian, and Thessalonian Churches.

In the Book of Common Prayer it is assumed throughout that the Church is now what it was at the first—a field sown with wheat and tares, or a vine having some of its branches fruit-bearing, and some barren.

We consequently pray God to "make clean our hearts within us," and "not to take His Holy Spirit from us."

We pray Him to deliver us from "all evil and mischief, from sin, from the crafts and assaults of the devil, from His wrath, and from everlasting damnation"—"from all blindness of heart, from pride, vain glory and hypocrisy, from envy, hatred and malice, and from all uncharitableness."

"From *fornication and all other deadly sin*, and from all the deceits of the world, the flesh and the devil."

In the first Collect of the Christian year, we pray that God would give us grace to "cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light."

In the fourth Collect (4th Sunday in Advent) we pray God to come among us, and with great might succour us, because *through our sin and wickedness* we are "sore let and hindered in running the race that is set before us."

In the Collect for Innocents' Day, we pray Him to "mortify and kill all *vices* in us."

In the Collect for the Circumcision, we pray that "our hearts and all our members being mortified from all carnal and worldly lusts, we may in all things obey God's blessed will."

And so throughout the book. In this respect also it is a book of COMMON Prayer, and reflects the teaching of the word of God.

CHAPTER VII.

CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

It will be needful now to ascertain what principles of Church government are laid down by the Holy Spirit in the New Testament, and in what form of Church polity these principles find their development.

There is, in very deed, but One Governor, or Bishop, or Overseer of the Church, in the same sense as there is but One Priest, and One Pastor.

The Eternal Son of God, as he is the True Vine, has every office of salvation wholly in Himself.

He is the One Apostle, or Messenger of His Father. He is the Angel of the Covenant; He is the Bishop of our souls; He is the High Priest of our profession; He is the Chief Shepherd or Pastor—the Good Shepherd; He is even the One sole true Deacon or Minister (Mark x. 45. Rom. xv. 8), assisting, upholding—in fact, "working" all other ministry or service.

It is clear, that if it had been His Sovereign will, He could have exercised all these offices alone—by Himself—for He is Omnipresent. Even though He left this world, He might have ministered to every need of His Church by Himself, dispensing altogether with any intermediate ministry of any sort; so that there would have been no room for any outward Church polity or organization—no place for any order of men to teach or preach, or govern, or administer Sacraments. Let us then see whether we can gather His will from His word.

Now, first of all, as soon as ever He began to exercise His own ministry, He associated others with Himself as His fellow-workers. Scarcely had He begun to preach Himself before He called Simon Peter, and Andrew, and, immediately afterwards, James and John. To these He added eight others, so as to make up the mystical number twelve. The account runs thus :—"And when it was day, He called unto Him His disciples, and of them He chose twelve, whom also He named Apostles (Luke vi. 13).

We can scarcely exaggerate the greatness of the position which He accords to these twelve men. "I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you." "Ye have not chosen Me but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit." "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to others in parables." "The Spirit of truth shall testify of Me, and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning."

In His last prayer He prays for them, especially distinguishing them from all the rest of His followers (John xvii. 20).

He baptized by their hands (John iv. 2). By their hands He twice fed the multitudes. Six times do we read that "He took bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitude." And that, after His departure, they were to continue to represent Him, we cannot but gather from what He said to them :—"I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven." "As My Father sent Me, so send I you."

In addition to this, we find that the things which Christ intended to be done for the salvation of souls, He

gave a special commission to these men to do; and, apparently, at first to these alone. To them alone, at the outset, He gave the commissions to preach, to baptize, to administer the Eucharist, and to absolve.

Even if other persons were accidentally present, these particular commissions were given specially to the eleven, inasmuch as we read; "He through the Holy Ghost had given commandment TO THE APOSTLES whom He had chosen" (Acts i. 2).

Now it is clear, that if our Lord's procedure with respect to these men, in placing them in such a position with reference to Himself and His Church, is any indication of His will respecting the future of His Church, then ministerial agency and authority must be a leading principle of His kingdom.

Such a precedent as the position which He assigned to the twelve could hardly fail of developing into a system in which ministerial agency and authority play a most conspicuous part.

Then, in the next place, our Lord's procedure in the matter of the calling and commission of the Apostles shows that something analogous to Apostolic succession is the principle on which He designed all Church authority to be transmitted.

All ministration is derived from our Lord through the Apostles to the Church, for the Apostles were not chosen by the Church, though there were apparently many professed followers of our Lord when they were chosen. They were chosen before the Church was in existence, and they were chosen to found it.

In the circumstances under which He designated them for their work, Christ altogether ignored any such theory as that all ecclesiastical power is invested in the people, and that ministers, when exercising their functions, are

only the delegates of the people, for mere order's sake doing what the whole body of believers cannot conveniently do.

If such had been the mind of Christ with respect to His Church, no reason can be assigned for the position which He assigned to "the twelve," and for the apparent limitation of the original commission to them.

On such a theory the new dispensation starts with a principle of Church rule, which has to be set aside in order to make room for the [supposed] true one, that the power resides in the people.

It would have been easy for Him who had the Spirit without measure so to order matters, that the principle of popular rights should have been intact from the very first.

He might have chosen the very same Apostles by controlling the whole body of His followers to choose them, but He did not. He appointed the eleven personally. He designated Matthias by lot. He chose Paul by a special miracle.

We now come to the actual government of the Church as we find it described in the Acts of the Apostles.

During the whole of the first part of this history, "the twelve" exercise supreme control over the entire Church. They seem to have been the only ministers of any sort; at least, till the appointment of the "seven," we read of no other.

We find them actually occupying the position which our Lord marked out for them. They reigned supreme in the Church. They acted together with one mind as if they were one person, St. Peter seeming to have the same office as their mouthpiece which he had before the Ascension. Thus we read (Acts ii. 14), "Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice and said," &c. Also (Acts ii. 37), "They said unto Peter, and to the rest of the

Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Those who believed "continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship" (Acts ii. 42).

We read that the price of the goods sold to supply the needs of the poor was laid at the Apostles' feet; *i.e.* placed at their disposal (Acts iv. 35).

We read that when Barnabas sold his land he "laid the price at the Apostles' feet" (Acts iv. 37). The judgment inflicted upon Ananias seems to have still more confirmed their authority; for, after it we read, "of the rest durst no man join himself to them, but the people magnified them" (Acts v. 13).

Such was the Pentecostal government of the Church: certainly not in the modern sense of the terms, popular or democratic.

All authority and discipline from above, not from beneath.

It was, in point of fact (and I use the term with the deepest reverence), a spiritual oligarchy, for the governing power was a college of only twelve persons, not removable by the popular will; and the Spirit was so dwelling in them, that when men attempted to deceive them, it was taken as if they lied to the Holy Ghost.

Hitherto we have had no mention of any other ministry.

We now come to the appointment of the persons usually called the "Seven Deacons." The twelve called the multitude and bid them look out men who might be guardians or trustees of the interests of those Jews who spoke Greek, and so were looked down upon by the Hebrews of pure blood. As it was a matter connected with the administration of public funds, the Apostles desired, as another Apostle did on a similar occasion (2 Cor. viii. 20), that "no one should blame them in the matter of the abundance which was ministered by them;"

and so they placed the matter, as all similar matters should be placed, entirely in the hands of the lay brethren; reserving to themselves the right to appoint and ordain those whom the brethren chose. "Look out among you seven men whom we may appoint over this business."

The names of these "seven" being all Greek names, show clearly that the appointment was made solely with reference to the dispute betwixt the Grecians and the Hebrews.

These men, designated to an office almost wholly secular, were set apart by laying on of the Apostles' hands.

This is the first Christian ordination on record. From it we learn that, according to Apostolic rule, every Church officer required this imposition of hands. If the Apostles felt it necessary to lay their hands on these men, to consecrate them to serve an office so comparatively secular, we may be sure that no one who administered the Sacraments would be suffered to do so without it.

We learn also from the subsequent history (chap. viii. 14) that the Apostles ordained the seven to perform a part, but not the whole of their own spiritual functions, for we find there that it was reserved to the Apostles remaining at Jerusalem to send two of their number to lay hands on (or confirm) the Samaritans converted and baptized by Philip.

This is to be carefully noted. It shows that a man may have a commission to perform some spiritual functions without having power to perform all.

Hitherto all Church rule appears to have been vested solely in the Apostles, who seem to have all continued in Jerusalem.

It is probable that the Apostles mentioned in Acts viii. 1, as having continued in Jerusalem, were the whole college *of twelve*. About this time (that is the time covered by

the narrative from the eighth to the twelfth chapters of the Acts) a great enlargement of the Church takes place. Before this we read of no Christians except at Jerusalem. Now we read of Christians (Jewish, of course) at Antioch even. We read of the Churches throughout all Judæa and Galilee, and Samaria (ix. 31). We read of St. Peter passing through all quarters, and on one of these missions opening the door of faith to the Gentiles; Christ expressly reserving it to an Apostle to do a thing which many would have thought that any Christian was competent to do without any commission whatever. About this time also the Lord converted St. Paul.

I shall consider fully the bearing of his life and acts upon Church government, after I have shown how the Church of Jerusalem, and the Churches dependent upon it, were governed.

About this time the Apostolic college of twelve was broken up. One—James the brother of John—was removed by martyrdom; and we never afterwards read of "the twelve" as in the former part of the history.

The government of the twelve is now exchanged for the presidency of one man, St. James, called by St. Paul, "The Lord's brother." From every notice of this man recorded in Scripture, it is certain that he exercised Episcopal power over the Church of Jerusalem. When St. Peter was delivered from prison, he directed that tidings of his release should be conveyed to JAMES, and to the brethren" (Acts xii. 17).

This of itself would of course prove little or nothing; but, taken in connexion with other notices, it comes in like an undesigned coincidence between two parallel narratives, confirming the truth of both.

The next notice of St. James is, when we read of him presiding at the first council, and delivering his sentence,

ex cathedrâ, as it were. "My sentence is, that we trouble not them which from among the Gentiles are turned unto God; but that we write unto them that they abstain," &c. (Acts xv. 19). That he should have so delivered the sentence in the presence of the Apostles is only to be accounted for on the hypothesis that the perpetual presidency over the Church in Jerusalem had been made over to him.

The third notice is when St. Paul, after his arrival after his third journey, is reported to have "gone in unto James, and all the elders were present" (Acts xxi. 18).

The mention of his name here, as distinguished from the elders who were present, agrees with the other notices of his high position in this Church.

He is mentioned in Galatians ii. 9, as the first of the three which "seemed to be pillars;" and a little further on, those Jewish Christians, on account of whose presence even Peter and Barnabas laid themselves open to reproof, are said significantly to have "come from James" (Gal. ii. 12).

These are the only notices of him in the sacred narrative, and one and all of them tend to confirm the truth of the testimony of all antiquity, that he was the first Bishop or perpetual President of the Church of Jerusalem.

We have now to notice the appearance of another order of Church officers—the Elders. They are first mentioned in Acts xi. 30. "Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judæa, which also they did, and sent it to the Elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul."

When these Elders were first appointed, and what was the nature of their office, we are not told. It is difficult to believe that they were appointed before the *seven*, because there is such absolute silence respecting any

persons ministering any office whatsoever under the Apostles, before the appointment of the seven. They are mentioned three or four times in the account of the council held in Jerusalem respecting the circumcision of the Gentiles. They there appear to occupy a middle place between the Apostles and the brethren.

The last notice of them is when we read that St. Paul went in unto James, "and all the Elders were present."

That they were a separate estate, as it were, in the Church is certain; but, respecting their authority and ministry we are told nothing whatsoever.

Such are all the notices of Church officers and government which we can glean from those parts of the Acts of the Apostles which treat of the Church in Jerusalem.

It is quite clear from this, that the book of the Acts of the Apostles was not written to teach us the details of Church government; for consider the questions respecting the government of the Church of Jerusalem which are left wholly without solution.

First of all, we are told nothing respecting the particulars of the Apostolic government. There is abundant proof that the Apostles exercised absolute authority, but they did this as one man. They seem invariably to have acted in concert, with one mind determining, and with one mouth decreeing, and that mouth was St. Peter's. This could only be accounted for by the fulness of the Spirit perpetually dwelling within them. It seems a most remarkable answer to the prayer of the Saviour on their behalf, "that they all might be one."

Then, in the next place, there were persons called Apostles—and, apparently, in the strictest sense of the term, such as Barnabas—who were not of "the twelve." Most probably St. James, the brother of our Lord, was of this number; ?but respecting the authority of these

secondary Apostles, and its relation to that of the twelve, we are told nothing.

Then, with respect to the seven called Deacons, what we are told is almost contradictory. They were ordained to execute one work of a quasi-secular character, but we afterwards find them going about as Evangelists.

Then, with respect to the Presbyters, or Elders, we are in total ignorance respecting the nature of the ministry on which they waited. We are not told whether they were, as their name implies, older men, who formed a sort of senate or chapter under James, or whether they were superintendents of particular congregations, meeting in houses or rooms, of which (as the Christians then possessed no large buildings) there must have been an immense number.

Then we are told nothing respecting another matter of the deepest importance, viz. the relations between the authority of James and that of the other Apostles.

He was, most probably, not one of the twelve.? He is called an Apostle, but so were Barnabas and others, who were certainly not of the twelve. When his separate authority commenced, and under what circumstances, we know not. When the twelve were at Jerusalem in the former part of the history, Peter always spoke or decreed for them; but, at the council held at Jerusalem, at which, *apparently*, the Apostles as a body were present, James was unquestionably the president, for he summed up and pronounced the decree authoritatively; and, at the end of St. Paul's third journey he was evidently exercising undivided authority, as no other Apostles were then in Jerusalem (Acts xxi. 18).

Then a number of now insoluble questions arise respecting the council held in Jerusalem. The Apostles, elders, and brethren, come together to consider of the matter.

After they have come to a decision, they send letters

headed, "The Apostles, and elders, and brethren send greeting to the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia;" and ending with, "it seemed good unto the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burthen than these necessary things, that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from things strangled, and from fornication" (Acts xv. 23—29).

Now how is it that the *elders* and *brethren* write in this way to the *brethren* in such far-distant places as Cilicia? What authority had the "elders" and "brethren" in Jerusalem to bind upon the "brethren" of Cilicia abstinence from things strangled, and to loose them from the obligation of the Mosaic Law. The Apostles had undoubted authority so to do, but surely not the "elders" and "brethren" of a local Church. The letter is not hortatory but authoritative. Did the Apostles then simply for form's sake, associate the elders and brethren with them, as St. Paul at the beginning of his epistles frequently joined the names of his companions with his own, though every line of the subsequent letter shows that his mind alone had been at work upon it; or had the Church of Jerusalem some real precedence or authority over the scattered Churches of the circumcision, which, on a matter like this, they naturally stretched over their Gentile neighbours?

But there is another matter, of far more importance, on which the Acts of the Apostles throws no light whatsoever, and that is the relations subsisting between the Jewish and Christian ecclesiastical polity; for, for nearly half a century, a Christian Israelite was under two systems, each having its own discipline and its own worship. Such an one would be a Christian, having hope only in Christ; and yet he was zealous for the law, *i.e.* for the Mosaic ritual. We read that there were "many thousands of such" (Acts xxi. 20).

St. Paul even "walked orderly, and kept the law," *i.e.* the ritual law, at the very time when he was stoutly resisting its imposition on the Gentiles. (Acts xviii. 18, 21, 22; xx. 16; xxi. 26.)

A member of the Church of Jerusalem, then, being a Christian, would be under the rule of James and the Christian elders; being a Jew, would be under the ecclesiastical discipline of the high priest and the Jewish Sanhedrim.

Now, as both these systems affected the whole of private, social, and public life, it is clear that their claims would require continual adjustment in the case of those who considered both as binding on the conscience; but respecting this adjustment we are told nothing.

Such a state of things, of course, could not be permanent, but it was in force during the whole period embraced by New Testament history.

This may be the true reason why so little is told us respecting the ecclesiastical organization of the Church of Jerusalem, the mother of all Churches. If more had been told us, it might have misled us; for, owing to the Jewish element pervading it, much in that Church must have been temporary, and so no rule for the Church in after ages.

The few notices of its organization or government all teach one principle, viz. Apostolic rule merging into Episcopal.

It remains now to show, that in the life, acts, and writings of the Apostle of the Gentiles, we have the principles enunciated which necessarily developed into that government which the earliest ecclesiastical history represents as pervading the Church.

It pleased the Lord to raise up another Apostle, one not of the twelve, to gather the Gentiles into His fold.

His Apostolic commission came, as he expressly states,

not "of men, neither by man," *i.e.* not by popular election, or by designation of the other Apostles, but directly from Christ. His solemn setting apart to his office was by the sensible interference, almost, one would say, by the word of mouth of the Holy Ghost. "The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul to the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts xiii. 2). Even in his case the laying on of hands was not dispensed with. Though he had "seen the Lord," and had been "caught up into Paradise," he had yet to submit to the Divinely appointed rite.

After this, his life was spent in visiting the countries bordering on the Mediterranean Sea, founding Churches, superintending them, revisiting them, writing letters warning them against false teachers, or reproving them for not continuing in the doctrine which he had taught them, or answering questions which they had sent him.

His personal history closes very abruptly after the account of his arrival in Rome.

I said that in the case of the Church of Jerusalem we are told nothing respecting the mode in which the twelve Apostles brought their joint authority to bear on the Church.

Not so with St. Paul. He exercised over the Churches which he had planted undivided Apostolic authority, and he did not allow this authority to be disputed. He based its exercise upon his Apostolic commission, which he asserted, often in strong terms, at the head of his Epistles; and he grounded this commission on the direct will of God.

The following are instances:—

"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an Apostle . . . . by whom (*i.e.* by Jesus Christ) we have received grace and apostleship" (Rom. i. 1, 5).

"Paul, called to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God" (1 Cor. i. 1; also 2 Cor. i. 1, and Ephes. i. 1).

"Paul, an Apostle (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father)" (Gal. i. 1).

It is to be particularly remarked, that though in several Epistles he associates other persons with himself, as sending the opening salutation, yet he takes care never to join these persons with himself as bearing the Apostolic commission. It is, "Paul, an Apostle, and Sosthenes our *brother*" (1 Cor. i. 1); "Paul, an Apostle, and Timothy our brother" (2 Cor. i. 1); "Paul, an Apostle, and Timotheus our brother" (Colos. i. 1).[1]

In every Church, harassed by false teachers, he reasserts very decidedly his Apostolic authority. In the Epistle to the Galatians, he intimates his equality with James, Peter, and John, and how they had arranged together that he should take the Gentiles, they the circumcision. (Gal. ii. 9.)

In the two Epistles to the Corinthian Church, also divided by false teachers, we find several direct assertions of his Apostolic authority; such are (1 Cor. iv. 9), "I think God hath set forth *us* the Apostles last;" (ix. 9) "Am not I an Apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?" ver. 5), "Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as *other* Apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas;" (xv. 9), "For I am the least of the Apostles, that am not meet to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God; but by the grace of God I am what I am."

Compare this with "I suppose I am not a whit behind

[1] In the Epistle to the Philippians he drops the assumption of apostleship, and this enables him to associate Timothy with himself as a fellow-servant of Christ. In the two Epistles to the Thessalonians he does not style himself anything, and so we read "Paul and Sylvanus and Timotheus unto the Church of the Thessalonians," &c.

the very chiefest Apostles" (2 Cor. xi. 5), and with "In nothing am I behind the very chiefest Apostles, though I be nothing" (xii. 11).

We have now to consider the exercise of this authority on the part of the Apostle. They who have but once read through his Epistles can have but one opinion on this matter, which is, that St. Paul exercised this authority autocratically. Of course, I am aware of the charge of irreverence which I incur by applying such a word to the rule of the Apostle, but this I cannot help. We have to do with a fact, and that fact is, that the Apostle ruled the Churches under his superintendence with absolute authority.

He exercised, it is true, this authority with all the love and tenderness of a parent. He never exercised it for selfish purposes or personal ends. He called himself, and he acted as, the last of all and the servant of all. He abased himself. He worked with his own hands rather than be chargeable. He entreated his converts, he implored them; he was with them in meekness and fear, and in much trembling (1 Cor. ii. 3); he even made their prayers a condition of his salvation (Phil. i. 19): but, with all this, he never let the reins of power out of his own hands; he never permitted his authority to be called in question, and he allowed no opposition. The following instances will show that I have not overstated this. I take them in order.

"I will come unto you shortly, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power." "What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?" (1 Cor. iv. 19, 21).

"I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed. In the Name of our Lord

Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan," &c. (1 Cor. v. 3—5).

"I wrote unto you in an Epistle, not to keep company with fornicators; ... but now I have written unto you not to keep company" &c. (1 Cor. v. 9, 11).

"I command, yet not I, but the Lord ... So ordain I in all Churches" (1 Cor. vii. 10, 17).

"I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them unto you." "The rest" (of the regulations respecting the Eucharist) "will I set in order when I come" (1 Cor. xi. 2, 34).

"Concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the Churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you," &c. "If Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear" (1 Cor. xvi. 1, 10).

"If I forgave anything, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ" (2 Cor. ii. 10).

"Titus ... remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him. I rejoice, therefore, that I have confidence in you in all things" (vii. 15, 16).

In the next chapter, the eighth, we have an instance of his contrasting his Apostolic authority with the natural influence which such a father in Christ ought to possess:— "I speak not by commandment.... Herein I give my advice" (verses 8, 10); but in the latter chapter he returns again to the authoritative:—

"Being absent, now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that if I come again I will not spare" (xiii. 2).

"*It is a* good thing to be zealously affected always in a

good thing, and not only when I am present with you" . . . "I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice, for I stand in doubt of you" (Gal. iv. 18, 20).

"Marcus, touching whom ye have received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him" (Col. iv. 10).

"We have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you" (2 Thess. iii. 4, also verses 6, 10, 12). Also (verse 14),—"If any man obey not our word by this Epistle, note that man." Ending with (ver. 17), "The salutation of me Paul, with mine own hand, which is the token in every Epistle, so I write."

I would remark upon the foregoing, first, that there is not one word, in any Epistle, of any organization in any Church, which would remove that Church, for any purpose, from under his supervision or make it independent of his authority. We have no word of any bishop, or local presbytery, or synod, or periodical conference, or chapter, possessing independent authority.

Now that there were ministers in each Church, not only for preaching the word, but also for exercising discipline, is quite certain, for the converts were told very plainly to "submit themselves" to them: but the control or ordering of all matters was kept by the Apostle in his own hands. How, whilst absent on his journeys, he kept an eye over so many Churches, we shall afterwards see.

Whatever ecclesiastical organization there was in these Churches, the Apostle never recognises it as a power or estate which had authority to sit in judgment on his letters.

I would now ask particular attention to another point.

In most, if not in all these Churches, there must have been persons endowed with special gifts of the Spirit, such as "prophecy" and "discerning of spirits."

These gifts must have been abundant in the Corinthian Church, for St. Paul writes to them as enriched by Christ "in all knowledge, and in all utterance," so that they "came behind in no gift" (1 Cor. i. 7).

We should have thought that such gifts would have made any Church comparatively independent of Apostolic control. But it was not so. The Spirit so ordered His influences, that they never clashed with the Apostolic authority, by which He Himself primarily worked.

The bearing of this will be clear from the following.

At the end of the eleventh chapter, St. Paul tells the Corinthian Christians that he will set in order certain matters pertaining to the administration of Holy Communion when he comes (1 Cor. xi. 34).

Now, how was it, seeing that there were in the Church many persons endowed with spiritual gifts, that they could not, among themselves, settle matters of detail of this sort?

Because it was evidently the intention of Almighty God that they should receive all matters of this kind *from without.*

The Apostle cuts short all such absurdities as that the word of God is the voice of the congregation, with the exclamation, "What! came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?" (1 Cor. xiv. 36.)

We have now to consider, by what means the Apostle was enabled to exercise control and oversight over so many Churches.

He must have had some special instrumentality for doing this, for he speaks of there coming daily upon him "the care of all the Churches" (2 Cor. xi. 28).

We have no difficulty in ascertaining this, for the Apostle had at least twenty persons attached to him, who *were not* merely his companions, but his ministers, under

his orders, like the staff of a commanding officer (Acts xix. 22, xx. 4).

By these, he kept up constant communication with all the Churches under his jurisdiction. In his Epistles, he continually commands his converts to receive such, and to obey them as if they were himself.

The most prominent of these were, Timothy, Titus, Silas, Epaphras, Erastus, Aristarchus, and Tychicus.

Let us collect the notices which we have of some of these, and we shall see that these men did not follow him about for the sake of mere companionship, or to attend to his personal wants, but to be strictly under his orders, to carry his messages to the Churches, and report their state to him.

First, Timothy. In the first notice of this man (Acts xvi. 1—4), we read that Paul would have him go forth with him; then he left him, with Silas, at Thessalonica (Acts xvii. 14). Then he sent for him again. The words are: "Receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus, for to come to him with all speed" (Acts xvii. 15).

Then, on another occasion (chap. xix. 22), "he sent into Macedonia, two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus." Then, afterwards, "he purposed to return through Macedonia," and no less than seven of these persons went with him, among whom was Timothy (Acts xx. 3, 4).

Then, in the Epistle to the Corinthians, we read, "For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus . . . . who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways, which be in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every Church" (1 Cor. iv. 17). Still more significant are the words in the last chapter (xvi. 10), "Now, if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear, for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do. Let no man therefore despise him:

but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren"—*i. e.* with those who were deputed by the Corinthian Church to bring the collection to Jerusalem. Again, St. Paul sent him to the Philippians, in order that he might report their state to him (Phil. ii. 19); and this, too, almost immediately after he had sent Epaphroditus, whom he styles his "brother, and companion in travail, and fellow-soldier."

Respecting Titus, the second in importance of the Apostle's companions, it is clear, from St. Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians, that between the sending of the First and the Second Epistle, Titus had brought a report of their state to the Apostle, who had sent him to them as his representative, for only as such would such a Church have received a subordinate like Titus, "with fear and trembling" (2 Cor. vii. 15).

And he sends Titus again to them, and desires them to consider him as his (St. Paul's) "partner and fellow-helper" (2 Cor. viii. 23), and, with him, another of his companions, whose name he does not mention, but whom he describes as "Our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things" (viii. 22).

Tychicus was another whom St. Paul actively employed in the same oversight. He despatched him to Ephesus and to Colosse, evidently to see to the state of these Churches. To the Ephesians, he writes:—"That ye may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things; whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose," &c. (Ephes. vi. 21). To the Colossians, "All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord, whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate" (Col. iv. 7).

When in prison, at Rome, the Apostle sent him to Ephesus (2 Tim. iv. 12); and he also intimates to Titus that he might send him (Tychicus), or Artemas, to Titus, to bring him to the Apostle at Nicopolis (Titus iii. 12).

Silas, Luke, Mark, Apollos, and Demas before his defection, Erastus, Trophimus, Aristarchus, Crescens, Artemas, and others, are all mentioned as attending upon him, as if for the same purpose.

Such was the oversight or episcopacy exercised by this Apostle over all the Churches which he had planted or founded.

All closely watched and controlled, either by himself personally, or by means of men who were his constant companions, and who consequently knew how he would act under any circumstances which might arise.

One point yet remains. What provision did he make for the government of these Churches after his death?

We have full information upon this point in three Epistles, written shortly before his martyrdom—one written two or three years before that event. In these, we have his latest determinations respecting the supply of the Churches' needs.

These Epistles are written to two of his most active fellow-helpers, Timothy and Titus, and from what they contain, and from what they omit, we can entertain no doubt as to how the Apostle would have the government of the Churches carried on after his decease.

They contain a solemn transmission of his Apostolical authority (so far as its governing element was concerned) to these two men, through whom, as his ministers, he had so long acted, and they totally omit to give any intimation that this authority was to cease and be superseded by some more democratic form.

They provide for its continued exercise through indi-

viduals. They make no provision for its future exercise in synods of presbyters, all officially equal, and deciding their differences by a majority of votes.

First, they assume the continuance of the Apostolic authority in the persons of Timothy and Titus.

Proofs are :—

"I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus. . . that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine" (1 Tim. i. 3). Here is authority given to Timothy over teachers and preachers.

In the third chapter the qualifications needful in candidates for two orders of ministers, bishops and deacons, are set forth, as if Timothy had either the sole choice of these persons or the sole power of ordaining them. The Apostle distinctly asserting (ver. 14 and 15) that in the choice or ordination of these men Timothy was to act for him.

In the fifth chapter, the Apostle gives sundry directions to Timothy respecting elders and widows. Widows under a certain age are not to be put on the roll. The elders that rule well are to be "counted worthy of double honour," and an accusation is not to be received against an elder "except before two or three witnesses" (1 Tim. v. 9, 17, 19).

The words in chapter vi. ver. 3: "If any man teach otherwise," taken in connexion with other intimations which we have before noticed, evidently imply that Timothy had authority over all teachers in the Ephesian Church.

In 2 Tim. ii. 2, we have a very plain authority given to Timothy to look out and ordain teachers, and in ver. 14 and 25, and in chapter iv. 2, 3, 4, sad forebodings of impending divisions and heresies, and directions to Timothy respecting his treatment of them, and those who fomented them. Similarly Titus was left in Crete that he

might "set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city" (Titus i. 5).

The qualifications of these bishops or elders are afterwards enumerated, as if Titus alone was responsible for their appointment and ordination.

St. Paul also enjoins him to "rebuke sharply" (Tit. i. 13), to "rebuke with all authority" (ii. 15), and to "reject an heretic after the first or second admonition" (iii. 10).

It is clear, then, that St. Paul committed to these two men authority over these Churches and all their ministers and teachers.

These three Epistles are the only Epistles in which there are any directions whatsoever respecting the government of the Churches. In no other Epistle is there one word respecting the choice, qualifications, or ordination of ministers, and these three Epistles are written to individual companions of the Apostle—not to Churches.

Now, if it had been the will of God that His Church should be ruled after some democratic model, would not directions respecting such matters as "ordination" and "qualifications of ministers" have been sent to the Churches themselves? If God had intended that the people should be the source or depository of Church power, or that the Apostolic authority should in future reside in a board of presbyters, would not Epistles especially bearing upon the exercise of Church power have been addressed to the people or to the presbyters of the Churches? Would they not have been told that all ecclesiastical power had been entrusted to them—*i. e.* to the laity—that they must religiously guard the deposit from all encroachment, and beware lest in the infancy of the Church an evil precedent should be established, if they allowed even the companion and fellow-helper of an Apostle to usurp the authority inherent in the Church itself? But no such

words are written to them; they are never bid to watch their rights with jealousy; they are bid rather to obey and submit themselves.

Nothing appears to me more significant of the will of God respecting the government of His Church than this.

But, in the last place, in these latest writings of the Apostle we have no intimations whatsoever that the authority which he was conferring on Timothy and Titus was temporary and abnormal—that it was to be speedily superseded by some more popular or democratic form, when the Churches were able to exercise such a form.

If it had been the will of God that the Church should be governed by boards of presbyters, then ample directions must have been given by St. Paul to his companions to organize the Churches on this principle, by forming Presbyteries and Synods, and by endowing them with plenary authority, or rather, perhaps, assuring them of the authority already inherent in them as the representatives of the people.

But no such directions are given. There is not a word to Timothy or Titus to form the elders of Ephesus and Crete into Synods or Presbyteries, with independent power to ordain and govern. On the contrary, Timothy is told to "lay hands suddenly on no man," and Titus is reminded that on him lay the responsibility of "ordaining elders in every city."

There is no word to either of these men to associate others with themselves as judges of either doctrines or persons; on the contrary, Timothy is told not to receive an accusation against an elder except before two or three witnesses, as if he alone were the judge; and Titus is directed to "reject an heretic after ~~two or three admo-~~ the first and second nitions" (1 Tim. v. 19; Titus iii. 10).

From what has been adduced from Scripture in the

foregoing pages, we gather that the government of the Churches founded by St. Paul was Apostolic, merging, after the Apostle's death, into Episcopal.

By Episcopal government I mean government centred in one man; not, of course, so that one man should govern without advice or constitutional restraint, but that one man should be its depository. So that the power of ordaining and overseeing was not derived from the people through the presbyters to a president; or exercised by the people through deacons, or in popular assemblies; but authority flowed from the Apostles through their delegates to overseers of Churches.

In the Epistles of the other Apostles there are no directions whatsoever respecting the government of the Church, so that the field of investigation is narrowed to the Pastoral Epistles of St. Paul.

In the Book of the Revelation we have the messages or Epistles to the angels of the seven Churches—these angels being, without doubt, the governing ministers of these Churches—those in whom the Apostolic power, so far as it could be transmitted, was lodged.

It is to be noted that these latest messages of God are sent not to synods, or presbyteries, or to the people, but to angels, *i.e.* to individuals to whom the chief oversight was committed.

So far for the testimony of the New Testament to the principles on which the Apostolic Churches were governed.

It must be abundantly clear to the reader that such principles of Church rule must necessarily develop into the Diocesan Episcopacy which early ecclesiastical history presents to us as flourishing in full vigour from one end of the earth to the other.

The principles of Church rule on which St. Paul acted, and on which he bid Timothy and Titus act, did not, and

could not possibly, develop into the Church organization of the Congregational or Presbyterian sects.

All ecclesiastical history, with one consent, presents to us the phenomenon of the huge cities of the Roman empire—Rome itself, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, Ephesus—having each but one ecclesiastical head, not elected annually or biennially, and not removable by the popular will.

Now, seeing that even on heathen testimony there was an immense multitude of Christians in some of these cities, and seeing that the Christians were all this time under persecution, and so could not erect churches of any size, it is clear that there must have been in these cities a vast number of small congregations, consisting each of as many persons as a large room or court of a house would hold, and yet we read of but one supreme ecclesiastical governor, or bishop, with whom all the separate congregations were in communion as the centre or heart of the Apostolic κοινωνία.

The Scripture principles or facts stated in the foregoing pages form the only solution, which has the least shade of probability in it, of the universal prevalence of Episcopacy in the earliest period.

The scheme invented by late German writers appears to me to involve the greatest improbabilities. We are told that the first Churches were governed on a Presbyterian or on some popular model—that somehow or other, we are not told for what reasons, all these Churches, or their ministers rather, became tired of their liberty or equality, and desired Episcopacy—that this epidemic for Episcopal rule seized the whole Church, so that (as is universally acknowledged) by the time of Cyprian (A.D. 250) the government of the Church was everywhere Episcopal.

But surely we must ask, What was the will of God in this matter?

If a democratic constitution, such as Presbyterianism or Independency, was established in all the primitive Churches by the will of God, how could this be altered except by going contrary to His will—if, that is, He willed such a government to be permanent?

If God willed that this supposed original democratic constitution of the Churches should be merely temporary, then there is an end of the matter—then this original popular government is a thing of the past, just as the semi-Judaical state of the Church of Judea is a thing of the past, and we have no practical concern with it.

But if it was the will of God that this supposed original democratic constitution was to be permanent, then we are to believe that a tide of popular opinion in favour of Episcopacy, a thing contrary to God's will, set in from the earliest period, and soon became so universal that it overwhelmed the original Divinely appointed democratic government: and yet neither St. Paul nor any other Apostle, is inspired to say a word of warning against the impending ruin. On the contrary, he is inspired, as we have seen, to say and do much which could not but help on the tide against this supposed original popular government. He rules the Churches without any regard to any supreme democratic organization which God may have given to them, and he gives no orders to his subordinates to establish such a form or recognise it as established.

If this original democratic constitution is according to the will of God, then Episcopacy *in any form* is a sinful usurpation, for it, of necessity, interferes with and neutralizes an organization adapted to express and carry into effect the will of the congregation. On the supposition, then, that God established some democratic form to be

the permanent government of His Church, how came a constitution of a diametrically opposite character to be established without a protest? Why was not some Luther raised up to make his voice heard from one end of Christendom to another against such corrupt following of Apostolic precedent? How could the consent of the whole Church be got for the surrender of institutions founded on popular right, and the substitution for them of institutions founded on Apostolical succession? We cannot then account for the universal prevalence of Episcopacy on the hypothesis of some original popular constitution becoming unpopularised.

It must be remembered that the hierarchical or Episcopal principles of the second or third centuries are in one sense a modification of the hierarchical principles of the New Testament — *a most necessary modification*, but still a modification, for the government exercised by Apostles, so far as it is revealed to us in the New Testament, was in substance hierarchical. It was a government, no doubt, utterly without pomp or parade. It was a government entirely in the interests of the governed, and was altogether free from all self-aggrandizement in those who exercised it; but notwithstanding this it was absolute, and it was carried on by sacred persons not designated to their office by the popular voice, or removable by the popular will, and so was in the highest sense hierarchical. The government of the Churches after the Apostles' decease, by such men as Timothy and Titus even, could not possibly have had the prestige of the purely Apostolical, and must necessarily have been a modification of it.

Again, the Church government by Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, as it appears in the Greek copies of Ignatius, is *not* only a modification of that higher Episcopacy which

is necessarily implied in the rule of inspired companions of Christ, but it is also a modification of that Episcopacy which must have been exercised by such men as the constant companions of St. Paul, for "Presbyters" and "Deacons" are joined *with* the Bishop by St. Ignatius, as commanding, *along with the Bishop*, the obedience of the faithful. So that it is the greatest mistake to assume that the earlier we get in Church history the more democratic the form of government must be.

From what I have written I think the reader will perceive how beside the mark are all controversies respecting the names or titles of Christian ministers, since the matter in dispute is from beginning to end a matter of things, not of names.

The things, or principles, which we have to do with, are, first, the authority exercised by the Apostles over the whole Church and its ministers of all grades.

Secondly, the authority exercised over various Churches, with all their ministers of all kinds, by men deputed by the Apostles.

We can gather nothing from the mere name of an office what its peculiar functions are; and this applies to every designation of ministers in the New Testament—neither Apostle, Prophet, Bishop, Presbyter, nor Deacon are applied uniformly.

There was a difference of authority even amongst those to whom the name of Apostle was given. Nothing can be clearer than the distinction between "the twelve" and all others except St. Paul, for St. Paul was evidently equal in authority with "the twelve," and he was, as we have shown, most careful to assert his full Apostleship. And yet St. Barnabas certainly, and St. James probably, were accounted Apostles, though not of "the twelve;" but in what respect their authority differed from that of "the twelve" we are not told.

Again, Epaphroditus is called an Apostle to the Philippian Church (Phil. ii. 25), but evidently rather in the sense of Evangelist, not in the high sense in which "the twelve" or St. Barnabas were Apostles.

Again, Andronicus and Junia (Rom. xvi. 7) are said to be "of note among the Apostles;" and a careful consideration of this passage will, I think, show that the word "Apostle" here is used in its widest sense of "messenger." (Compare 2 Cor. viii. 7 in the original.)

So far for the highest official name. Let us now consider the lowest, the διάκονος, or deacon.

All ecclesiastical history agrees in representing the "seven" (Acts vi.) as deacons, but yet this name is not once given to them. They are ordained to superintend the distribution of alms, an office always accounted the speciality of the deacon; and yet we read not one word about their fulfilment of this their peculiar duty, and the only two of whom we are told anything appear to exercise the higher functions of baptizing, disputing, and preaching.

Again, when we read of Timotheus and Erastus *ministering* to St. Paul (Acts xix. 22), the very same word (διακονεῖν) is used which is employed to describe the fulfilment of their office by the deacons in 1 Tim. iii. 13 (using the office of a deacon).

Of course it is ridiculous to suppose that we are to judge of the duties and responsibilities of Timothy, as one of St. Paul's staff, as it were, by the functions of the deacons which it was afterwards part of his duty to oversee.

Then St. Paul calls Christ a deacon (Rom. xv. 8). He calls himself and Apollos "deacons" (1 Cor. iii. 5; see also in the Greek Rom. xvi. 1, Eph. iii. 7). And yet *nothing* can be more certain than that the "deacons" men-

tioned in 1 Tim. iii. are an order of ministers below the Episcopate or Presbyterate.

Of course the clue to all this seeming diversity is the idea of ministry, or service, inherent in the word διάκονος, an Apostle being, equally with a deacon or acolyte, a "minister," or servant (2 Cor. iv. 5) of the Church; only the Apostle was ordained to minister in some things for the benefit of souls, and the deacon in others.

And so with the words Bishop (ἐπίσκοπος) and Elder (πρεσβύτερος). The word "bishop," or "overseer," may be applied to the minister who *oversees* a congregation of twenty persons meeting in a room; or it may be applied to an officer like Titus deputed to "oversee" all the congregations of the Church in a large island, with all their ministers of all grades. And the word "elder," or "presbyter," may be (as it is) applied by an Apostle to himself, as being much the senior of those to whom he wrote (1 Pet. v. 1); or it may be applied to any lay person whose years and spiritual character give him weight in the congregation, as it is in Acts ii. 17—"your old men" (your "presbyters," as it is in the original) "shall dream dreams." Peter and John both call themselves "elders," and yet they at least were in the strictest sense "Apostles."

The "elders" mentioned in Titus i. 5 are certainly an order of Church ministers, and seem to be the same as the ἐπίσκοποι of verse 7; and yet the "elder" of 1 Tim. v. 1 would seem to be an elder in point of years rather than a distinct Church officer, for he is contrasted with the "younger;" and in the next verse the "elder" and "younger" women are mentioned evidently not as office-bearers.

Scripture is altogether silent respecting the duties of the elder. Apostles, Bishops, the members of the Jewish Sanhedrim, the Christian ministers who were present with

St. James, and the seniors in mere point of age, are all indifferently called "elders."

It is surprising that the controversy respecting Church rule has ever been made to turn upon any names of offices found in the New Testament. Half an hour with a concordance would convince any one that the mere names "bishop," "elder," "deacon," can decide nothing.

Supposing that in every case the name "bishop" is synonymous with "elder," and both represent the modern parochial minister or president of a congregation, you have still the fact that these men are throughout the New Testament assumed to be under the control of the Apostle, and of his vicar or delegate. So that, besides the Episcopate, or oversight of each separate congregation, there is the oversight of the whole Church centred in the Apostle, and by him transmitted always to individuals, never to boards or synods; and this to the close of the New Testament history.

So that, so far as the New Testament teaches us the government of the Apostolic Churches, there was no supreme government except the Apostolic oversight or rule, and no principle for transmitting this recognised except Apostolic succession by imposition of hands.

From the foregoing observations we can judge how much (or how little) truth there is in the oft-repeated assertion, that "no form of Church government is laid down in the New Testament."

It is quite true that no details are to be found there, such as the size of dioceses, the mode of election to Church offices, the order of proceeding in Church courts, the limits of the authority of presidents or bishops, or of presbyteries; but, though we find no details of this kind, yet we find one principle of supreme rule, and one only, and this is, that Church rule centres in the Apostle, and

is transmitted by him to individuals. No counter principle is to be found, such as that all Church officers have equal authority, or that all power resides in the people. So that the principles of Presbyterian or Congregational parity, or ecclesiastical democracy, are *not* to be found, and the principle of Apostolic Episcopacy *is* to be found, in the New Testament.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONFIRMATION.

In addition to Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, and Ordination, another rite of the Church was practised by the Apostles. This was the "Laying of hands" upon the baptized, with a view to their receiving a further gift of God's Holy Spirit.

We read in the book of the Acts, that after Philip had converted and baptized certain Samaritans, the Apostles sent Peter and John, who laid their hands upon them that they "might receive the Holy Ghost." (Acts viii. 14—17.)

It is not said that the Apostles did this in order to confer the miraculous gifts of the Spirit only; though from the fact that Simon *saw* that "through laying on of hands the Holy Ghost was given," we surmise that some gifts were bestowed of a more visible nature than the internal strengthening of the soul.

Again (Acts xix. 1—8), we read of St. Paul laying his hands on certain men in order to their receiving the Holy Ghost, and the sign that they received the Spirit was that they "spake with tongues and prophesied."

In Hebrews vi. 1—4 this "laying on of hands" is reckoned among the principles or foundations of the doctrine of Christ.

As all the other five "foundations" here enumerated have to do with matters with which each individual soul *in the* Church is personally and immediately concerned,

we can hardly doubt but that this "laying on of hands" refers *primarily* to a means of grace which belongs to each individual Christian, and so can be nothing else than what we call "confirmation," which is the only "laying on of hands" in which all the baptized partake.

These are all the references to it in the New Testament.

It seems to have been a revival of a rite belonging to the primitive patriarchal religion, and so far resembles Justification by Faith, which St. Paul takes some pains to prove to have belonged to the religion of Abraham, to have been in abeyance under the Law, and to have been restored under the Gospel. (Gal. iii.)

In the only two instances recorded, this "laying on of hands" was administered by the heads of the Church.

Now the continuance of this rite in the Church depends upon, and is a witness to, the perpetuity of the Apostolic fellowship and ministry.

For what are the facts?

In the Book of the Acts God has been pleased to give to us a history of the *foundation* of His Church by His Apostles, and of this only.

The one inspired book of Church history breaks off very abruptly in the middle of the Apostolic rule, ten years before the martyrdom of the Apostles Peter and Paul. During this time the Apostles administered this rite, and God was pleased to accompany it with the gift of His Spirit.

From within a hundred years after the time of the Apostles to the present time, we have the evidence of a succession of writers to its prevalence in the Church in their days.[1]

[1] Tertullian (A.D. 190) after describing the ceremonies in use at Baptism, proceeds to say, "Next to this the hand is laid upon us,

But in the ages after the Apostolic it was given with a view to conferring the ordinary rather than the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Is the Church right in thus requiring her chief ministers to lay hands on the baptized after the example of the Apostles? Evidently she is, if she believes in the perpetuity of the New Testament ministry, and if she takes as her guide the books of the New Testament.

For we find this "laying on of hands" mentioned incidentally in the New Testament as if it were a rite uniformly administered to the baptized. We find it even classed amongst such first principles as Repentance, and Faith, and Judgment; and we have not one word intimating that it was to cease with the Apostolic age. To ascertain whether this rite was administered by the heads of the Church after the decease of the Apostles, we have to refer to ecclesiastical writers, inasmuch as New Testament history does not reach to the termination of the Apostolic Period. We have to refer to the same writers to ascertain the Canon of the New Testament.

Two writers of a very early date allude to it as in constant use in their days.

From all these things we cannot but assume that it was according to the will of God that this rite should continue in the Church, for if its continuance had been contrary to His will, He would have inspired His Apostles to forbid it, and so it would have fallen into disuse.

calling upon and inviting the Holy Spirit through the blessing."—Translation in Lib. of Fathers, p. 264.

Cyprian (A.D. 250), "Which custom has also descended to us, that they who are baptized may be brought to the rulers of the Church, and by our prayer, and by the laying on of hands, may obtain the Holy Ghost, and be consummated with the Lord's signature."—*Epist.* lxxiii.

Again, the *Theory* of the New Testament is in its favour, for the Theory of the New Covenant is, that God gives grace to man largely, freely, and according to his needs. Now the grace of the Holy Spirit appears in the New Testament associated with certain miraculous powers; even faith appears in connexion with these miraculous powers; for we read, "These signs shall follow them that *believe:* In my name shall they cast out devils," &c. (Mark xvi. 17, 18.)

These miraculous powers were soon to cease, for the early followers of Jesus were empowered to work miracles simply in order that the heathen might know that the Gospel of the despised and persecuted Christians was from God. When the need for the exercise of such gifts was over, the power to work them was withdrawn. But as we know that the power to believe was not withdrawn, though belief was no longer followed by supernatural signs, so the "laying on of hands" was not discontinued when its miraculous accompaniments ceased.

After the deaths of the Apostles, then, it was left to their immediate successors either to abolish Confirmation, because the extraordinary gifts with which it was first accompanied were ceasing rapidly, or to continue the use of it in the hope (or rather in the faith) that God, who for wise reasons was withdrawing the extraordinary gifts, would still accompany it, when faithfully and devoutly used, with gifts suited to the wants of the individual or the times of the Church.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ORDER FOR THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD.

We have now to consider the Burial Service of the Church of England.

Its indiscriminate use has, of late, been the subject of much controversy. The Service, however, is allowed on all hands to be scriptural, and a most fitting benedictory rite of the Church when used over those of her children who "die in the Lord."

We have then to distinguish between the scriptural character of the Service itself, respecting which point there is no controversy, and whether such an *indiscriminate* use of it as prevails amongst us is in accordance with Scripture.

Now, first of all, it will be well to examine how this Service is really scriptural; because, if it be so, then a very large amount of our public teaching and popular religious literature which touches upon the state of the departed is very unscriptural.

There is a very marked difference between the way in which death and things after death are spoken of in the popular literature of the day, and the way in which these same matters are treated in the Prayer-book generally, and in the Burial Service in particular.

I think I am neither misrepresenting nor exaggerating the prevailing religious ideas on these awful subjects when I describe them as follows.

The moment after death the true Christian is supposed to "go to heaven." His spirit, disencumbered of his body, is supposed to be conveyed at once to the heaven of heavens, where he sees the throne of God, on which the Lord Jesus is now ruling over all things in His glorified Body.

He enters at once into a state of unspeakable and inconceivable bliss, to which such words as "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him," are applied as a matter of course. He is supposed to be crowned—to be shining in white apparel like an angel—in a word, to be "in glory."

Into this state the souls of converted persons are supposed to be drafted as they die. Once admitted there, they for ever enjoy fulness of bliss in the presence of God.

I would now direct the reader's attention to three matters connected with this view. First, it is incompatible with any realizing belief in the coming of Jesus Christ to judge the quick and the dead. Secondly, it practically ignores any degrees of reward. Thirdly, it almost wholly supersedes or obscures the truth of the Resurrection of the body.

I do not say that they who hold this popular view deny that Christ will come again, and judge all men, and raise up our bodies, but I say that in proportion as they hold the popular view, in that proportion they will make the Scripture statements respecting the Second Advent, the Judgment, and the Resurrection a dead letter.

It must be so, for our Saviour teaches us that He is the Saviour of our bodies as well as of our souls. He assures us that "they which are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good to the

resurrection of life." (John v. 28). He says, "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." (John vi. 54.) He says to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John x. 25), and He promises by St. Paul that He will "descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first." (1 Thess. iv.)

Nothing can be plainer than all this, but how is it made to agree with the popular notion which prevails? In some such way as this. The converted person ascends up now to heaven. There he at once enters upon the enjoyment of glory inconceivable. He sees his Saviour on His throne. He takes part in the anthems of the seraphim. During the intervals he converses familiarly with apostles and prophets.

Now, what can be added to such blessedness? Nothing which *we* can possibly appreciate; and yet something has to be added to it, for the resurrection of the body has not yet taken place. So it is supposed that the saint, having, perhaps for many hundred years, enjoyed the glories of that heaven in which Christ is manifested, is brought back again to earth, to go through the *form* of being judged, and of being welcomed to a place in which he has long been reigning; for this can only be a form in his case, seeing that he has been for centuries enjoying bliss in the highest heaven. Then on this his return to earth he is reinvested with his body, which he takes back with him into heaven. We cannot help silently asking, Why this return to earth, and this resumption of the body? If it be said that his happiness and glory will be increased by it, we answer that his happiness has been supposed to be already inconceivably great, seeing that he has long been amidst the glorious sights and sounds of the very court

of God. What glory or bliss that we can conceive can the possession of a *body* add to the pure spiritual delights which he has been long enjoying?

Not a word more need be said to show how this popular view practically supersedes the coming of Christ to judgment and the Resurrection of the flesh.

But this is not all. The popular teaching respecting death and things after it neutralizes (we may say altogether) another truth insisted on from one end of Scripture to the other—that the saints will be rewarded according to their works.

The popular idea of heaven is that of a vast hall or place of assembly, in which the saints are gathered together, engaged in one occupation. Now, in an assembly all men are, so to speak, on an equality. The only difference which an assembly admits of is that one man has a place nearer to the post of honour than another; but the Scriptures from beginning to end represent eternal reward as admitting of every variety of degree.

The difference in the rewards of the righteous is laid down in the parable of the Pounds. (Luke xix. 16). The servant who made ten pounds of the one lent to him was made ruler over ten cities; the servant who had made five of his one pound was made ruler over five cities.

In accordance with this the future state is most frequently designated by a name which implies every gradation of office and rank, and so scope is given in it for every degree of glory amongst those who will finally inherit it. It is called a KINGDOM. Now the idea of a kingdom presents us with a sphere for the exercise of our highest powers, which the mere assembly certainly does not.

In fact, the reconciliation of such a doctrine, as that men will be really rewarded according to their works,

with the prevailing ideas of the future, is practically impossible, and so the true doctrine has been to all intents and purposes set aside, though no single Scripture truth is more distinctly revealed, or more frequently insisted on.

The popular view finds its expression in the profane phrase that it is little matter what a man's place in heaven be, provided he gets there.

Let us now briefly consider what the Scripture leads us to look for respecting the future state.

First of all, the abode of the soul between death and judgment is nowhere called "heaven." It is called "Abraham's bosom," "Paradise," the unseen state into which the soul of our Lord "descended"—not ascended; never "heaven." The soul of the penitent thief was certainly not with our Lord in heaven, because The Lord Himself did not ascend into heaven till forty days after.

It is also expressly stated of one of the greatest of Old Testament saints that he is "not yet ascended into the heavens." (Acts ii. 34.)

Respecting the state of the soul between death and judgment there is very little indeed told us in Scripture.

It is a state of rest. "They rest from their labours." The martyrs are in one vision represented as under the altar, crying, "How long, O Lord?" and it was said to them that they "should rest yet for a little season;" but to call this state a state of glory is not only to call it by a name which the Scriptures never apply to it, but to connect with death that which the Scriptures constantly and emphatically connect with another event—viz. the second coming of Christ.

When St. Paul, for instance, speaks of receiving the crown laid up for him, he speaks of it as given to him at *that day*—the day of Christ's appearing. (2 Tim. iv. 1.)

Our Lord speaks of men entering upon the kingdom prepared for them, not at death, but after the general judgment. (Matt. xxv. 34.)

In accordance with all this, the day of judgment, or day of the appearing of Christ, is evidently regarded by such saints as St. Paul as even in their case the most tremendous reality.

Thus St. Paul says, "We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ." (Rom. xiv. 10.) Again, he says, "He that judgeth me is the Lord; therefore," he continues, "judge nothing before the time until the Lord come." (1 Cor. iv. 4, 5.) Again, "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body." (2 Cor. v. 10.) Again, St. Peter speaks of the trial of the Christian faith being "found to praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. i. 7), and of the faithful pastors of Christ's flock receiving a crown of glory that fadeth not away—not at death, but "when the chief Shepherd shall appear." (1 Pet. v. 2, 4.)

In accordance with all this, the one thing which Christ bid men look for was His second coming—not to each one at his death, but *from heaven*—"Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh." (Matt. xxv. 13.)

"Then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. . . . Take heed to yourselves lest . . . that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape those things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." (Luke xxi. 27, 34—36.)

Seven times are we assured that Christ shall come

again "as a thief," and told to watch for His appearing.

In accordance with these words of Christ the Apostles actually did watch for Christ's coming. St. Paul says, "From heaven we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus, who shall change our vile body, that it may be like unto His glorious body" (Phil. iii.); and he bids others "look for the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." (Titus ii.) St. James speaks of "the judge standing at the door," and "the coming of the Lord drawing nigh." (James v. 8, 9.)

Such is the universal teaching of the New Testament. Universal, I say, for there is not even any *apparent* counter teaching on this matter, and there is nothing to modify or qualify it.

If our Service, then, is scriptural, it must teach as Scripture teaches.

It must consequently direct the eye of faith, not to death as the entrance into glory, but to the Second Coming as the one hope of the Church.

It must re-echo the words of the Bride, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

It cannot, if it be scriptural, speak of the state before the great day as a state of glory, when such saints as St. Paul looked to the coming of Christ for their crown.

Such a Service God has, in His wonderful providence, preserved to us.

It is almost wholly silent on the state of the soul between death and the day of judgment, and would concentrate all faith and hope on the Second Coming and the Resurrection.

It opens with the words, "I am the Resurrection."

Then come those of holy Job. "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day

upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."

The minister then reads in the ears of the mourners St. Paul's great argument concerning the resurrection of the flesh.

After this the body is committed to the ground, "in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life."

Then we have a recognition that the dead which die in the Lord are, as the Spirit says, in a state of rest; that the souls of those who depart hence in the Lord "live," and are not in a state of torpor, or sleep, but "in joy and felicity;" but this is not the great object of our faith and hope, for we go on to pray that God may "shortly accomplish the number of His elect and hasten His kingdom; that we, with all those that are departed in the faith of His holy name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss both in body and soul in His eternal and everlasting glory."

And we conclude with a prayer to the "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life," to "raise us from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, that at death we may *rest* in Him," and at the general resurrection may be found acceptable in God's sight, and receive that blessed welcome to the kingdom of glory, which Christ has reserved to the great day of His appearing.

Our Burial Service is consequently in accordance with our creeds, in which we say nothing respecting the state of the soul after death, but profess that we believe in "the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting," and "look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come."

And now a word with reference to the *indiscriminate* use of this Service.

Our Order for the Burial of the Dead is evidently intended for those, *and those only*, who die in the Lord.

But I would ask the reader to ponder well this—that it is not merely two or three sentences which are not fit to be read over the corpse of a wicked man, but it is the whole Service which is utterly unsuitable to his case.

The scandal of reading this Service over the remains of the wicked would not be removed by the erasure of, or alteration of, or by the option to omit, a few words, such as "sure and certain hope," or, "as our hope is this our brother doth," whilst we meet the corpse of the supposed impenitent man with the words, "I am the resurrection and the life," and then read over it the lesson setting forth the resurrection of the body. Throughout this glorious chapter there is not the most distant allusion to any resurrection save the resurrection to life.

Now, if we read such a lesson over a corpse, we must read it with implied reference to the resurrection of that corpse, or we should not read it at all.

And since this place of Scripture refers only to *one* resurrection, it is as out of place and as great a mockery to read it over the corpse of a man, of whom we are sure that he will not come forth to the only resurrection which the chapter recognises, as it is to commit his body to the ground "in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to life," or to express a hope that he "rests in the Lord."

However we may seek to obviate some scandal in the eyes of our fellow-men by the removal, or alteration, of two or three clauses, still, if the present indiscriminate use of this Service be an offence in the eyes of the Almighty, we equally persist in this offence if we read over the corpses of the wicked a part of God's word which treats only of the resurrection of life, and which is silent respecting that horrible resurrection to which the finally impenitent must come forth.

Such a Service as that which we have inherited cannot be so used as to be appropriate alike to the righteous and the wicked.

And, moreover, I think that an assembly of our spiritual fathers with the avowed purpose of concocting a Service which should suit the case of the righteous and the wicked, would be a scandal in the eyes of thinking men, and an offence in the sight of God, such as has never yet been known in the history of our branch of the Church.

At present our Service belongs only to those who "die in the Lord," and it is read over all the professing members of the Church, *i.e.* over all the baptized who die without having been excommunicated—because we cannot presume to say who are, and who are not, cut off from Christ.

It is not within the limits of my present design to discuss the controversy which has lately arisen respecting the use of this Service—how far, for instance, new rubrics, or a Service for non-communicants, or the restoration of discipline, would alleviate or remove the scandal now complained of.

But one question does come within the scope of this treatise, and it is this:—Seeing that we must have an Order for Christian burial—seeing that this Order, if it is to be scriptural, must have for its key-note the Resurrection of the body—has God given to us any indication of His will respecting the principle on which such a Service should be put together; whether, for instance, we are, in the composition of it, to assume that the dead person will rise to the resurrection of life, or whether we are to devise, if possible, a Service which will suit the cases of the righteous and wicked alike?

Now, I think that God has given to us a very plain indication of what His will is with reference to this matter.

He has given to us, in the writings of the Apostle of

the Gentiles, two very striking references to the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. (1 Cor. xv.; 1 Thess. iv. 14—18.) One of these we have incorporated into our own Service, and it is a very full, precise, and dogmatic discussion of the matter. It is difficult to conceive of any Service for the Burial of the Dead, which could recognise the Resurrection of the person buried, without embodying in itself one or other of these Scriptures. And in both of them the Resurrection of life is the only one set forth, the Resurrection of damnation not being in either even remotely alluded to.

The fullest of these two was written for the sake of a Church which contained unworthy members; for in the height of his argument for the Resurrection, St. Paul had to check himself, and pause as it were, and say to them, "Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God."

And yet in writing to so mixed a Church—having in it unreproved fornicators and incestuous persons—the Holy Spirit withheld the Apostle from bringing in the Resurrection of condemnation.

Our Service, then, in recognising only the Resurrection of life, is in strict harmony with this marvellous chapter, which speaks of no other.

If our Service is read over those respecting whose future we can in reason entertain no hope, so the Apostle's words on the Resurrection of life reached those who, whilst they continued as they were, could have no part in it.

At other times, when men can hear us, we must speak plainly enough of sin and its consequences—of Christ coming in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God; but not when the sinner himself cannot hear us, and his kinsfolk, or weeping children, or distracted widow, can.

CHAPTER X.

CHURCH PRINCIPLES AND ANTIQUITY.

WHILST the Church of England upholds the paramount authority of the Holy Scriptures, she explains these Scriptures in accordance with interpretations which she finds in the very earliest Christian writers, rather than with interpretations struck out at any later period. Her whole Service-book is framed on a model to be traced to the remotest times.

I purpose now to consider whether she has Scripture warrant for this. In order to ascertain this, it will be needful to direct attention to the publication of the New Testament.

We have the several books of the New Testament bound together in one volume, as if it had all been published at one time: whereas nearly three-quarters of a century elapsed between the first proclamation of the Gospel and the writing of the last book of the sacred Canon. It was upwards of seventy years before any single Christian teacher or local Church could possibly possess the New Testament in its present form.

If, in addition to this, we take into consideration the fact, that every book then had to be copied out in manuscript, and if we also remember the very imperfect state of communication in those days, we shall be compelled to admit that a century, at the least, must have elapsed before the volume of the New Testament formed the text-

book of Christian instruction, as it does at the present time. How, then, were the Christians of Apostolic times instructed in Divine truth? Evidently by the *oral* teachings of the Apostles, and subordinate ministers.

The earliest in point of time of all the books of the New Testament is the First Epistle to the Thessalonians; and in this Epistle the writer takes it for granted that the persons to whom he wrote had been instructed in all Christian truth; for in this Epistle there is scarcely any doctrinal teaching.

Similarly, in writing to the Corinthians, he speaks of them as "enriched in all knowledge;" and yet this must have been from *oral* teaching, for they did not possess even one of the four Gospels. We know this, because the Apostle tells them that the account which he gave them of the institution of the Eucharist had been received by him directly from the Lord, and so could not have been derived from any one of our present Gospels.

The Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians were published not earlier than A.D. 61.

The Second Epistle to Timothy was certainly not published before the year 67; and this Epistle, the latest of all St. Paul's writings, contains a remarkable passage, which proves that, at that date, what he had taught orally was accounted by him to form the principal part of his teaching; for he writes to St. Timothy, giving him an express direction to adhere to, and to transmit to others, his (St. Paul's) *oral* teaching. "The things," he says, "which thou hast heard of me before many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (2 Tim. ii. 2.) It is evident that the Apostle cannot refer here either to his own Epistles, or to any of the then published Gospels. He can only refer to what was not at that time committed to writing.

The Gospels and Epistles of St. John were not written till the year 96. Let the reader consider for a moment what our New Testament would be without the Gospel of St. John; and yet two generations of Christians, far beyond any succeeding generation in both knowledge and love were without it.

It is abundantly clear from this, that any Christian living even so late as a hundred or a hundred and twenty years after Christ had received but a very small proportion of his religious knowledge from our present New Testament. He had received the same doctrine, and from the same source, but not in the same shape and way; for he must have received the bulk of his religious knowledge through the oral teaching of the Apostles, or through the faithful men to whom they had committed their teaching; and all this through the special providence of God, for God might have ordered it far otherwise. He might have given a volume, containing nearly all which is in the present New Testament, on the Day of Pentecost; in which case there would have been, from the very first, no room for oral teaching or tradition: but, instead of this, the volume which He has given to us is composed of twenty-seven separate documents, published in different parts of the world, during the course of above three-quarters of a century.

This is the reason why we of the Church of England defer to antiquity and early Patristic teaching, without making anything except the written word our standard. If there yet exist the works of any Christian authors who lived near to the times of the Apostles, who enter at all fully into Christian doctrine, and have no motive for misrepresenting the teaching then current amongst Christians, I cannot see how we can help setting the highest value on their testimony to the way in which the

Scriptures of the New Testament were interpreted in their day.

It stands to reason that we must do this, for the Christians of that day had the oral teaching of the Apostles and Apostolic men to enable them to ascertain the true meaning of Scripture. Such writers had access to the same writings of the Apostles as we have, and they were familiar with that Christian doctrine which was then in existence, which was derived from the Apostles, but not from those particular writings of the Apostles which have come down to us.

If we did not give some weight to the testimony of such early writers, we should be wilfully, and of set purpose, putting from us a means which God has given to us of ascertaining the right interpretation of His word. If men with such advantages bear witness that the Scriptures were uniformly interpreted in one way, and not in another, it is a strong proof to us, who hold that one way of interpreting Scripture, that we are right in so doing.

The following will serve as an illustration, and make my meaning clear:—

In the third chapter of the Gospel according to St. John, we have our Lord's words, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Here our Lord apparently connects Regeneration with Baptism.

If this had been the only place in the New Testament in which spiritual benefits were connected with the washing of water, we should, perhaps, have been tempted to spiritualize it away; but we have at least twelve other places in which, as I have shown, things pertaining to salvation are connected with this Sacrament. Taking this into account, the overwhelming probability is, that our

Lord alluded to the water of Baptism when He spake of being "born of water."

The Church of England has adopted this conclusion in the opening sentences of both her Baptismal Services, and she also directly asserts it in her comment on these very words of our Lord in the "Service for the Baptism of such as are of Riper Years."

Now, it must be in the nature of things a strong confirmation of her being right in this interpretation of John iii. 5, when we find a Christian writer who flourished within fifty years of the publication of St. John's Gospel, speaking of Baptism thus:—

"Then they (the catechumens) are led by us to the water, and are regenerated by the same process of regeneration by which we were ourselves regenerated; for they then receive the laver in the name of God the Father and Master of the Universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost. For Christ says, 'Except ye be born again, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.'"

This well-known passage is from Justin Martyr, an author who lived in Palestine; and the date of his martyrdom is not later than 160. Let the reader observe that this primitive writer and martyr not only connects Regeneration with Baptism, but seemingly identifies the two.

Now, this place bears testimony to the fact, that when our Lord used the word "water," in the expression, "born of water," it was from the very first understood to refer to that baptismal water which God, for some good but inscrutable purpose, had joined with the Spirit, as a means to bring about Regeneration.

In a large number of authors who have written within the last three hundred years, we have our Lord's words

interpreted as if by "water" He did not mean water; many, for instance, explain being "born of water and of the Spirit" as meaning being born of the Spirit acting like water. According to this view, our Lord's allusion to water was not merely superfluous, but dangerous and ensnaring, because the Holy Spirit had elsewhere connected grace with the application of water in Baptism, and the attentive student of Scripture could not help remembering this when he thought of our Lord's words here.

Another writer, whose words I have now before me, lays down that by "water" we must here understand the word of God, so that our Lord means, "Except a man be born of the Scriptures and of the Spirit."

Now, these interpretations, however ingenious or seemingly spiritual, are simply traditional. They are "traditions" which can be traced to certain fallible men, living about three hundred years ago.

Let the reader notice that these traditions set aside the natural meaning of Christ's words, which certainly imply that Regeneration is a joint birth of water and of the Spirit. Men who hold these traditions hold that our Lord instituted a mere form of profession, as a sort of substitute for circumcision, when He ordained Baptism in water in the name of the Trinity.

The Church rejects these traditional interpretations, traceable to certain so-called reformers, and adopts that earlier interpretation traceable to Apostolic times, which makes our Lord's words in John iii. in harmony with those other words of His Spirit which connect grace with the due reception of Baptism.

Then, with respect to the other Sacrament, I have noticed that every reference to the Holy Communion in the New Testament implies that it is a means of grace, in

which the faithful are, in some true but mysterious and heavenly way, made partakers of the body and blood of Christ.

We have a reference to the mystery of the Holy Communion in the same author I have quoted above. Justin, in his "Apology," writes thus: "For we do not receive it as common bread or as common drink, but in what way Jesus Christ our Saviour, being through the Word of God incarnate, hath both flesh and blood for our salvation, so also have we been taught that the food over which thanksgiving has been made by the prayer of the Word which is from Him, from which (food) our blood and flesh are by transmutation nourished, is the flesh and blood of Him, the Incarnate Jesus. For the Apostles, in their records which are called the Gospels, have delivered that Jesus so commanded them, that He, having taken bread and given thanks, said, 'Do this in remembrance of me. This is my body;' and likewise, having taken the cup, and given thanks, He said, 'This is my blood.'"

Whatever obscurity there may be about some parts of this passage, it is decisive in favour of the fact that the teaching of the Primitive Church, which in Justin's time must have been mainly derived from the oral teaching of the Apostles, was in accordance with the written teaching of the Apostles in the New Testament; and every word of their written teaching on the Eucharist is in favour of the high view of the Sacrament—that there is in it a mysterious communication of our Lord's Body and Blood.

If the teaching of the Primitive Church had been rationalizing on this point, Justin Martyr would never have described Eucharistic doctrine in such terms when writing to commend Christianity to the heathen; for in what he says of the nature of the Eucharist he rather creates a

difficulty in the way of the heathen embracing the Gospel, whereas, by representing the Eucharist as a mere memorial, he might have made all clear.

The interpretation, then, which makes our Lord's words to be mere figure or metaphor, is *traditional*, to be traced to Zuingle and certain other reformers. It is just as much a tradition as the Invocation of Saints, and nothing like as old.

In the early Christian writers (and by early I mean those who lived in the century or century and a half after the Apostolic age) we have a considerable literature; not very voluminous, but amply sufficient to show what was the tone and character of the theology of the times when the oral teaching of the Apostles cannot have died out.

These writings amply prove that this theology was neither Romish, nor Rationalistic, nor Calvinistic, nor Puritan.

We gather from it that the Christians of the earliest times took a high view of the Sacraments, without believing in Transubstantiation; that they took a high view of the official character of the Christian ministry, whilst they were altogether ignorant of the claims of the Papacy.

Nothing conceived in the tone of a modern Puritan treatise has come down to us from these times.

No single treatise of any early Christian writer can be tortured into conformity with the Calvinistic or Methodistic systems.

But it is hinted that the mystery of iniquity was then at work, and that this mystery is discernible in the undoubtedly high tone of every single reference to the two Sacraments which we find in these writers.

Has God given to us in the after history of the Church anything to guide us as to whether this is so or not?

The great difference between Primitive and Puritan Theology is, beyond all doubt, the different position assigned to the two Sacraments in the one and in the other.

Now let the reader mark and ponder well this fact.

It took one thousand years to corrupt Primitive Christianity into Popery, whereas it did not take one hundred years to corrupt Calvinism into Socinianism.

It took, I repeat, one thousand years to corrupt Primitive Christianity, with its high view of the Church, its ministry and sacraments, into Popery; and the Christianity so corrupted held, even in the view of its adversaries, all the essentials of the faith. This Christianity, though encrusted with superstition, held fast to the Godhead of our Lord, and His Incarnation, and the truth of His Atoning Sacrifice, and could apply these truths to the consolation of the sinner with as much power as the Reformation or Post-Reformation Theology could possibly do.[1]

[1] Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury in the year 1100, wrote a tract for the consolation of the dying who were alarmed on account of sin. The following is an extract from it :—

Question. Dost thou believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for thee?

Answer. I believe it.

Question. Dost thou thank Him for His passion and death?

Answer. I do thank Him.

Question. Dost thou believe that thou canst not be saved except by His death?

Answer. I believe it.

Come then, while life remaineth in thee, in His death alone place thy whole trust: in nought else place any trust; to His death commit thyself wholly; with this alone cover thyself wholly; in this enwrap thyself wholly; and if the Lord thy God will to judge thee, say, "Lord, between Thy judgment and me I present the death of our Lord Jesus Christ; no otherwise can I contend with Thee." And if He shall say that thou art a sinner, say thou,

The practical works of such a writer as Anselm show as firm a hold on Christ by faith as the writings of any divine since Luther's time. Even on such matters as Predestination and Election his statements are as strong and as unqualified as those of Calvin or Bradford, or any other Predestinarian writer who is willing to believe that the Bible teaches something besides Predestination. And he was but one of many who, shortly before and after his time, thought and taught as he did.

It took one thousand years, then, to corrupt Primitive Christianity, with its sacramental teaching, into Popery, whereas it did not take one hundred years to corrupt Puritanism, or Ultra-Protestantism, with its anti-sacramental teaching, into the rankest Socinianism—a Socinianism utterly denying all that makes Christ and His doctrine of value to lost souls.

Within half a century from the time of the Reformation, the evil was fully developed, and in less than two centuries (that is, by about 1750) the evil spirit of unbelief had subdued, or all but subdued, to itself the Reformed communions in Poland, in France, in Holland, in Switzerland.

By this time (1750) it had wholly subdued the descendants of those who seceded from the Church of this country at the time of the Restoration, and had taken firm root amongst the descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers in New England.

"Lord, I interpose the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between my sins and Thee." If He say that thou hast deserved condemnation, say, "Lord, I set the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between my evil deserts and Thee; and His merits I offer for those which I ought to have, and have not." If He say that He is wroth with thee, say, "Lord, I oppose the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between Thy wrath and me." And when thou hast completed this, say again, "Lord, I set the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between Thee and me."

The reader will find unimpeachable evidence of the state of Socinianism into which the Protestantism of Geneva had fallen, in the eighteenth chapter of the "Life of Robert Haldane," a pious Scotch Congregationalist, who in 1816 undertook a journey to Geneva, and spent some years in endeavouring to revive Evangelical Religion in the city of Calvin and Beza. His efforts produced no effect whatsoever on the consistory of ministers, except to bring into stronger relief their profession of rampant Socinianism.[1]

The reader will also find unanswerable testimony to the state of Socinianism into which the rest of Switzerland has fallen in a work entitled "Lectures on Foreign Churches," published by Ministers of the Free Church of Scotland in 1845. From vol. i. p. 380, it appears that the two principal cantons, Zurich and Vaud, renounced publicly the Helvetic Confession, because of its testimony to the divinity of the Saviour.

From pages 382 and 383 of the same book we learn

[1] The crowning proof of their apostasy is to be found in the fact that, twenty years before that period (*i.e.* before 1777), the infidel D'Alembert complimented the venerable company (*i.e.* the Presbyterian Consistory) in the French Encyclopædia in an article in which he observes, "To say all in one word, many of the Pastors of Geneva have no other religion but a perfect Socinianism rejecting all that they call 'mysteries.'" The writer of the life of Haldane proceeds to give another astounding testimony to this state of things from an extract of a letter of Jean Jacques Rousseau, which is too long for insertion here. (Fifth Edition, p. 395.)

It is, however, most melancholy to see one who truly loved his Saviour, as Haldane did, throwing all his strength into reviving a form of Christianity which had so miserably failed to keep up even the semblance of belief in such truths as the Incarnation and Atonement of Christ. It never seems to have struck him that there must be some radical defect in a system which so rapidly and irremediably declined from the faith once delivered to the saints.

that the Established Protestantism of Holland is in the same state.

Respecting the religious state of Holland, the reader will find much interesting information in an article in the *Colonial Church Chronicle* for October, 1862; the writer of which informs us that "the reality of miracles, the inspiration of the Bible, the propitiatory character of the Death on the Cross, the Personality of the Holy Ghost, the doctrines of original sin and of eternal punishment, are all denied, not only by the Unitarian, but also by the Groningen, or *Liberal* party, to which the great bulk of the influence and learning of the nation belongs."

But by far the most rapid decline of Continental Protestantism took place in Poland.

From a notice of the Racovian brethren, which I have now before me; it appears that an Italian, named George Blandrata, who became a Zuinglian or Calvinist, but who went further than his masters, and on that account was compelled to leave Geneva, went to Poland in 1555, and shortly afterwards to Transylvania, where he was active in sowing Socinian error in a soil so well prepared to receive it, that the Socinians were speedily able to hold Synods of large numbers of ministers, nobles, and commoners; and as early as 1565 they had attained a complete and extensive ecclesiastical organization over Poland and Lithuania.

"In 1559, a nobleman of Podolia, not one of themselves, but of the Genevan communion, built the Socinians, Arians, &c. a town at Racow, near Sandomir, which eventually became a seat of commerce and of general literature, as its printing facilities were good. Its college sometimes numbered 1,000 students of all nations, creeds, and classes, including the noblest families; and

all who went there *left it enemies of the doctrine of the Trinity.*" [1]

So far for Poland. Let us now turn for a moment to the Puritanism which, in 1662, seceded from the Church of England mainly on Zuinglian grounds. We are told by a Dissenting authority, that, in 1832, out of 258 Presbyterian congregations, all but twenty-three had lapsed into Socinianism.[2]

The same declension took place in New England.

This rapid declension of anti-sacramental Christianity into Socinianism is to me the most extraordinary fact in the history of Christian opinion.

It is not a merely religious declension, to which any Church or body of men may be subject.

Let it be remembered that the Protestant bodies which thus lapsed into the denial of Christ's Godhead and Atonement separated from the Church of Rome in order to bear witness to the all-sufficiency of the work of Christ, which they conceived that that corrupt Church obscured by the doctrine of human merit.

How was it that bodies who commenced their career with setting forth Christ alone as the sinner's hope, were not preserved from so extraordinary a lapse—a lapse so apparently contrary to the principle of Christ's all-sufficiency, which was their watchword?

It is not, I think, to be accounted for by their rejection of Episcopacy, for there have existed in the Church for ages heretical bodies preserving both Episcopal regimen and Apostolical succession. As far as I see, it can only be accounted for by their rejection of that sacramental doctrine which is at once the great witness to, and safeguard of, the doctrine of the Incarnation.

[1] From Rev. A. W. Brown's "Manual on Romanism," page 48.

[2] *Eclectic Review*, February, 1832.

Their anti-sacramental principles led them to explain away, or make void, on Rationalistic grounds, certain of the strongest statements of Christ. The door was consequently thrown open to Rationalism. The Spirit was grieved, for the most startling words of the Saviour were made of no account. And so they who began with making void those statements of Christ, which set forth a new birth of water and the Spirit, or that we must eat His flesh, or that "as His Father sent Him, so sent He His ministers," were permitted to stumble at those sayings which set Him forth as the Only-Begotten of the Father, and the Atoning Lamb of God.

CHAPTER XI.

THE EVANGELICAL SYSTEM.

In the preceding pages I have set forth a part of the evidence for the truth of Church principles, which we derive from the word of God.

I have brought forward direct Scripture assertions for all that I have advanced respecting the historical form of the Gospel, the grace of the Sacraments, and the functions of the Christian ministry.

It is difficult to see how such statements can be set at naught, and yet they are deliberately pushed aside by a very large number of religious Englishmen.

It will be needful to consider what pretext professedly enlightened men have for refusing to entertain so many direct Scripture assertions.

I have read much of the popular religious literature of the day, and in it I find one ground in particular which is tacitly rather than avowedly taken by the opponents of Church principles, which it may be well to examine.

It is assumed that we have in the Scriptures a fully developed scheme of doctrine, called the "Evangelical system," with which system the holding of Church principles is absolutely inconsistent.

It is assumed that it is a principal work of the Holy Spirit to give the truly converted man a right perception of the several parts of this scheme, and of their relations to one another.

Now, in answer to this, I say that there is not a single

book of the New Testament which could possibly have been written by one who took that view of "the Truth," which in a former generation was taken by such men as John Newton, Thomas Scott, or Romaine, or the Haldanes, and which is taken by the popular leaders, preachers, and tract writers of the party calling itself Evangelical of the present day.

There is not a single Epistle of St. Paul which, if it came now to light for the first time, would not be pronounced by these men to be the work of a very partially enlightened man.

I will first examine the Epistle to the Romans. If the popular Evangelical scheme is to be found anywhere in the Scriptures, it is to be found here.

Now we have, in this Epistle, statements which no modern Evangelical would have thought of writing on such all-important matters as—first, "a saving apprehension of Christ;" secondly, the means by which we are to be individually assured of an interest in the death of Christ; and, thirdly, the final perseverance of those who "stand by faith."

1st. The Apostle does not write as men do now on such a matter as the very object of that faith by which the sinner is justified, for he asserts that the sinner has "righteousness imputed to him," not when he is "enabled to close in with God's offers of mercy," or when he believes that Christ died for him in particular, but when he believes in God the Father who raised up God the Son. For we read: "Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but for us also to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." (Rom. iv. 23, 24.) Not once, but twice is this asserted in this Epistle: "If thou *shalt* confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, *and shalt*

believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. x. 9).

I have never found in any modern treatise any statement at all like this respecting what we are to believe in order to be justified.[1]

In the Apostle's mind, God the Father raising up God the Son is the Supreme Object of justifying faith.

So also He is in our Lord's words: "He that heareth My word, and *believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life*" (John v. 24). This place, it is to be remarked, is the Gospel in the Service of the Communion of the Sick. So also in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "He is able to save them to the uttermost that *come unto God* by Him" (Heb. vii. 25); and in St. Peter: "Who by Him do *believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead*, and gave Him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God" (1 Peter i. 21). In accordance with this, St. Paul says: "Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my Gospel."

In the next place, the Apostle does not accord with the Evangelical system when he implies that we have a veritable interest in Christ's death, formally made over to us in the Sacrament of Baptism, for how otherwise can we understand his words, "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death. Therefore we are buried with Him by Baptism into death"? Therein we are planted with Him in the likeness of His death, and so are bid to "reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God," and *therefore* we are not to allow sin to have dominion over us. (Rom. vi.)

I have so fully shown the bearing of this place in

[1] There is no such statement, for instance, in so elaborate a work on justification as that by Bp. O'Brien.

a former chapter (III. page 56), that I can only now refer the reader to what I have there written.

In the third place, would any one who held the views now current respecting Calvinistic Election, have ever put into a treatise at all bearing on such a topic, such a passage as the following: "Thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear. For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee. Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God: toward them that fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness, otherwise thou also shalt be cut off"? (Rom. xi. 21, 22).

Here the salvation of those once "standing by faith" is assumed to be uncertain, and contingent on their "abiding in God's goodness." So that if we could imagine such a thing as this Epistle coming to light now for the first time, it would be at once pronounced by our Evangelical party leaders and newspapers to be unsound on three such points as "justification," "union with Christ," and "final perseverance."

Again, would any Calvinist have thought of drawing such a parallel between the effect of Adam's sin as reaching all, and Christ's righteousness as reaching all, as we find in the latter part of the fifth chapter? Let any reader who has Thos. Scott's Commentary within his reach just turn to this good man's remarks on verses 15—19, and see the difficulty he has with them. I am not here asserting that there is no difficulty about the passage, or that the solution offered by Scott is wholly beside the mark; but what I say is this, that one who had Scott's views of "The truth" would never have penned a passage which required so much explanation and so much modification.

A man whose views were conformed to so rigidly exclusive a system as the Calvinistic, would never have written

for publication things which can with such difficulty be made to square with its exclusiveness.

Let us now turn to the Epistle to the Hebrews, as the next on account of its length and doctrinal importance.

Would any one who had clear views respecting "The truth," *i.e.* the modern Evangelical scheme, give as the first principles, or the foundations of the doctrine of Christ, the six which we find enumerated in this Epistle (chap. vi. 1—4), two of these being "The doctrine of Baptisms," and of "Laying on of hands"?

We have a list of leading principles in a book[1] written by a clergyman who professed to leave the Church because of its unscriptural character, and yet his list is very different from that given in this place by the authority of the Spirit of God—Baptism and the Laying on of hands being of course excluded.

Again, would any one who held the Calvinistic scheme contemplate for a moment the irrevocable fall of those "once enlightened," and who had "tasted of the heavenly gift," and had been "made partakers of the Holy Ghost"? Could he contemplate those who had been sanctified by the blood of the Covenant counting it an unholy thing, or those who had "come to the Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem," and the "blood of sprinkling," "refusing him that speaketh"?

Again, let us take the Epistle to the Ephesians. There is no part of God's word which has furnished so many phrases to our modern Evangelical writers as the first two chapters of this Epistle have; and yet there is no part which, taken as a whole, more unequivocally condemns them as coming short of the mind of the Spirit; for there

[1] Rev. B. W. Noel's "Church and State."

is no part of God's word in which the individualizing view of Christianity is so completely sunk in the Church view.

In the first two chapters, the election—the calling—the justification—the salvation—even the access to God, are not that of the individual as such, but of the individual as a member of the Church. It is "we," "ye," not "I," "thou," from first to last.

And if the former chapters are thus irreconcileable with the mere individualizing view of God's salvation, what shall we say of the latter? The contrast between the Apostolic and the modern Evangelical mode of inculcating the practical duties of social and domestic life is almost ridiculous.

Think of husbands being bid to love their wives, and wives to obey their husbands, not with a view of demonstrating their justification or election, but because "Christ loved the Church," and because the "Church is the body of Christ" (Ephes. v. 22—30).

Again, take the first Epistle to Timothy.

In this most important pastoral Epistle, (dealing more fully than any other with the duties and obligations of the ministry) Justification by Faith, or Final Perseverance, are not mentioned; and yet we have in it such statements as the following:—

"She shall be saved in childbearing (rather by childbearing), if they continue in faith and charity, and holiness, with sobriety" (ii. 15).

"Let not a widow be taken into the number under three-score years old, having been the wife of one man, well reported of for good works: if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted; if she have diligently followed every good work" (v—10).

"Rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may inherit eternal life" (vi. 17).

Again, the truly enlightened man is supposed to be

guided to a right apprehension of the true place of the various articles of Evangelic truth. First, conviction of sin; then a saving apprehension of Christ; after these, Sanctification. These must be expressed in their right order. Any reversal of this order so as to put Sanctification first, at once stamps the person so committing himself as "unacquainted with the truth."

Now, it is a fact that *the Apostle of the Gentiles scarcely ever observes this order*. He continually puts Sanctification or its equivalents *first, i.e.* before Faith or Justification, and its equivalents. The following are instances :—

"Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. vi. 11).

"We are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth" (2 Thess. ii. 13).

"Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned" (1 Tim. i. 5).

"Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. iv. 12).

"But thou, O man of God, flee these things, and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness" (1 Tim. vi. 11).

"Flee also youthful lusts, but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Tim. ii. 22).

"Hearing of thy love and faith which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus" (Phil. 5).

"But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: that the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience" (Tit. ii. 2).

"This is the covenant I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. x. 16, 17).

Now let us turn to the Epistle of St. James. We read in it the following :—

"Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak" (i. 19).

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (i. 27).

"Ye see, then, how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (ii. 24)

"My brethren, be not many teachers (διδασκαλοι), knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation" (iii. 1).

"Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord" (v. 14).

Supposing, now, that a document containing these things, and purporting to be written by an Apostle, was to come to light now for the first time, would it not be summarily condemned as written by a totally unenlightened man, and especially as we find in it not one reference to the Atonement? And yet we believe that this Epistle is an integral part of that God-inspired Scripture which is profitable for doctrine.

Having now considered the words of the servants, let us turn to those of their Master. Amongst His sayings are the following :—

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt. v. 7).

"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you—that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. v. 44, 45).

"Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

"If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matt. vi. 14, 15).

"Judge not that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged" (Matt. vii. 1).

"Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world—for I was an hungred and ye gave me meat" (Matt. xxv. 34, 35).

"When ye stand praying forgive if ye have ought against any, that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses" (Mark xi. 25).

"Love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again, and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest" (Luke vi. 35).

"Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven" (Luke vi. 37).

"That on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience" (Luke viii. 15).

"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell that ye have, and give alms" (Luke xii. 32, 33).

"Give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you" (Luke xi. 41).

"Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations" (Luke xvi. 9).

"He that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God" (John iii. 21).

"If ye love me keep my commandments: and I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter."

"He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me shall be loved of my Father."

"If a man love me he will keep My words, and My Father will love him" (John xiv. 15, 16, 21, 23).

"If ye keep My commandments ye shall abide in My love" (John xv. 10).

"The Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me" (John xvi. 27).

He who uttered these, and many similar words, must have been thoroughly cognizant of any system of truth on which it was His blessed will that His Spirit should enlighten His people.

He surely can see the truth as it is.

Would the Redeemer have ever said words like these; or would He through His Spirit have brought these words to the remembrance of the Evangelists, so that they should insert them into the book of the New Covenant, if it had been His will that His people should take that view of Christian truth which is called the "Evangelical System?" The thing is utterly incredible, for the view I allude to is absolutely intolerant of any counter statement.

And consistently so, for if the Holy Spirit be given to inspire Christians with clear views of the way of salvation, they must have those clear views, and the only test of their having them is their ability to express them clearly.

So that the Holy Spirit is tacitly assumed to be given to enable Christians to select certain texts or passages out of the rest of Scripture, to join them together, quite apart from their context, in a sort of logical chain, and to wipe out of the mind, and make as though they had never been written, a vast number of other places of Scripture, including amongst them some of the most striking sayings of Christ Himself.

Now I do not for a moment bring forward these sayings of Christ and of His Apostles, in order to loosen the reader's hold on the leading truths of the Evangelical system. Those, I mean, which it has in common with the Catholic faith. Such truths are the life of my own soul, and my only hope. But I bring them forward for the purpose of convincing the reader that, if statements like these, all upholding in very strong language human merit, are not really inconsistent with a right apprehension of Gospel truth, much less need Sacramental doctrine be inconsistent with a right apprehension of the same truth.

For let the reader remember, that the idea of human *desert* or merit cannot possibly adhere to a right view of

Sacraments. That is, it cannot be attached to the high view, but may, and, in fact, does adhere to the low view.

For the high view is, that the Sacraments are channels of grace, and that God has chosen, as the outward sign of Sacraments, the meanest and commonest things possible, so that men cannot, if they think at all, boast of the mere channel or means, but must be carried back in thought to the grace of the Saviour, Who has ordained them to be means: whereas, according to the low view, Sacraments are works; for in them we are supposed to make a profession of our individual hold on Christ—we blazon forth our faith in Him.

Any grace which we hope to receive in Sacraments we can only hope to receive through the free mercy of Christ.

A man may imagine that merit and righteousness in God's sight, attach to almsgiving or to repentance, or to forgiveness of injuries, all which things our Lord expressly states to be needful to salvation; but it is impossible for him to persuade himself that any such merit belongs to being washed by another with a little water in the Name of the Trinity, or to receiving a morsel of consecrated bread.

If such an idea enters into his head, it is because it has been injected into it by the opponents of Sacramental grace.

The true doctrine of the Sacraments is all on the side of free grace. It is a part of the free grace element of Christianity, and was so considered by the Reformers, both in Germany and England.

In the preceding pages I have given a very small part of the evidence which I might have given of the extraordinary contrariety between the expressions used in the word of God, and the popular statement of the Evangelical system.[1]

[1] I have not referred to the Old Testament, from which I could have brought forward much to the purpose, and this not from the

I might have taken a large number of phrases from the most approved writers of this school, and have shown that

strictly legal books, such as Leviticus and Deuteronomy, but from the words of God respecting the acceptance of Abraham. He is cited by St. Paul as the especial type of the Christian, as one who is justified by faith, and yet God Himself says of Abraham, "All nations of the earth shall be blessed in him. For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment, that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him" (Gen. xviii. 18, 19).

Again:—"By Myself have I sworn, saith the Lord; for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, &c.; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; *because thou hast obeyed My voice*" (Gen. xxii. 16).

Again, speaking to Isaac:—"In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because that Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws."

Now are these words of God contrary to His words by His servant St. Paul? Assuredly not; but they certainly do bind upon us most strongly that we must not always speak in one way, and square our teaching and thinking to one rule.

Again, I might have cited much from the acknowledged Evangelical books, such as the Psalms, Isaiah, and Daniel. See the following places: Isaiah xxxiii. 15. "He that walketh righteously and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil. He shall dwell on high, his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks. . . . Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty."—xlviii. 18. "O that thou hadst hearkened to My commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea."—lvi. 1. "Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye judgment, and do justice, for My salvation is near to come, and My righteousness to be revealed."—lviii. 7. "Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light *break forth* as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth *speedily*, and thy righteousness shall go before thee."

there are no expressions at all corresponding to them to be found in the Bible.

I might have set forth a large amount of Scripture language, which those who adhere to the Evangelical system eschew the use of altogether. Now if those who adhere to this system require as the sign that the Holy Spirit has savingly enlightened a man that he should make use of certain phrases and eschew the use of certain other phrases, and if the inspired Scripture writers avoid the use of those phrases which are looked for, and freely use the other which are regarded with suspicion, then one cannot honestly avoid the conclusion, that it is contrary to God's will that we should demand as a sign of a heart enlightened by God's Spirit conformity to that mode of arranging and expressing the doctrines of grace with which so vast a mass of Scripture is at variance.

Again, verse 10. "If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon-day."

Again, let the reader refer to the following places in the book of Psalms: Psalm xviii. 20, 21, 25, 26; xxvi. 1, 2, 6; xxxiv. 12—16 (quoted 1 Peter iii. 10); xxxvii. 26—38; xli. 1; l. 23; ci. 2; cvi. 3, 4; cxii. (especially verse 9, quoted 2 Cor. ix. 9); cxix. 1, 2, 6, 22, 31; cxxv. 4.

If it be God's will that His ministers should bind upon men the strict enunciation of the Evangelical system, then the use of the Book of Psalms containing such places as the foregoing, is absolutely dangerous; for no after explanation of these places can remove the effect of the first impression we receive from them.

See also Daniel iv. 27. "Wherefore, O King, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor; if it may be a lengthening of thy tranquillity."

I remember that some time ago Lord Shaftesbury, then Lord Ashley, was reproved by the *Record* newspaper, for having cited these words of God's Holy Spirit in a speech of his upon the state of the poor.

CHAPTER XII.

PREACHING AND SACRAMENTS.

It may be well here to notice an objection to the view of the Christian Ministry and Sacraments set forth in the preceding chapters.

We are reminded that the Apostles, and St. Paul in particular, especially designate themselves as teachers and preachers, and not as priests or administrators of Sacraments; and it is assumed that there is some antagonism between "preaching" and "administering Sacraments," or, at least, that the importance ascribed to preaching necessarily takes from the importance of Sacraments.

Now, unquestionably preaching or teaching is the first thing in the kingdom of God, for without it, we cannot apprehend that the kingdom of God is His kingdom, or that the Church is His Church.

But the matter at issue is, do we "preach" as an *end* or as a *means?* Do we preach for mere preaching's sake, or do we preach to lead men to something further? We shall be able to ascertain the respective places of preaching and Sacraments, and the folly of instituting any comparison between them, by considering the great Pentecostal sermon and its effects.

This sermon, preached by St. Peter, led to the conversion of a large number of persons. It led to those persons asking what they were to do to be saved; and this led the Apostle to bid them "repent, and be baptized in the name

of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." So that the first Christians learnt through the preaching of the Apostles that on their repentance they must be grafted into Christ's mystical body.

In telling them this, the Apostle acted strictly on the commission which he had received from his Master, which ran thus:—"Preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

Again, we read that these converts continued steadfastly in the "fellowship" of the Apostles (Acts ii. 42). How is it that they did this? Evidently because of the "preaching" of the Apostles. The Apostles, no doubt, taught their converts what their Master had taught them, about His Church or Kingdom; that it was the vine of which He was the stem—that He had prayed most earnestly for its unity on His way to the Garden of Gethsemane, and such-like things; and this teaching or preaching led to the continuance of the converts in the "fellowship of the Apostles," *i.e.* in the unity of the Church, and in all that continuance in such unity involves; and this fact, because of its importance, is duly chronicled by the sacred writer.

Again, these converts are said to have continued steadfastly in the "breaking of bread." This they never would have thought of doing, unless the Apostles had preached to them that Jesus is the bread from heaven—that the bread which He gives is His flesh; and that on the night of His betrayal He had blessed and broken bread, saying, "Take, eat, this is My body."

Their steadfast continuance in the reception of the Eucharist was the consequence of their attending to the "preaching" of the Apostles.

Now we turn to St. Paul. He was appointed a "preacher, and an Apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles (2 Tim. i. 2). But what truth does He assure us that,

above all other things, he was specially commissioned to teach?

He declares that a special dispensation of grace was committed to him to make known a certain mystery, and that this mystery was, that "the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and of the same body;" *i.e.* the mystical body of Christ (Ephes. iii. 6). From this we learn that, in the eyes of St. Paul, the "truth as it is in Jesus" comprehends all "Church," or "body of Christ" truth: and so the particular Epistle in which the Apostle thus states the nature of the revelation vouchsafed to him is pervaded with Church truth, or the Church aspect of union with Christ.

Now let us turn to his other teaching.

If we have his teaching, or the substance of his teaching, in the Epistle to the Romans, then the doctrine that Baptism is a means of union in Christ's death, in order that we may "walk in newness of life," is a part of St. Paul's teaching and preaching.

If we have his *teaching* in his first letter to the Corinthians, then, to be consistent, he must have *preached* that the "bread which we break" in the Eucharist is the "communion of the body of Christ," and that it is the pledge to the believer of his continued incorporation in Christ (1 Cor. x. 16, 17).

His preaching or oral teaching can hardly have differed from his teaching by letter, and that it did not we have a proof in the effect which it produced upon the jailor. In answer to his question, "What shall I do to be saved?" it was said to him by the Apostle, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house:" and then (it is said) they "spake to him the word of the Lord," which "word of the Lord" must have comprehended something to the purpose respecting Sacraments; for it is

said that "he was baptized, he and all his straightway." This could not have taken place so quickly, unless he had been taught that some great benefit from Christ depended upon baptism.

But we are reminded that St. Paul was sent by Christ "not to baptize but to preach the Gospel;" and that he thanked God that he had "baptized none of the Corinthians, save Crispus and Gaius."

This place is gravely cited, as if St. Paul meant to disparage his Master's ordinance, and to set himself above the other Apostles, for whereas Christ gave to them a commission to preach *and* baptize, St. Paul, it is assumed, considered himself called to preach only, *i.e.* to perform the higher act, and not the lower.[1]

There is no need to adopt an interpretation so inconsistent with St. Paul's regard to the words of his Divine Master, for he himself tells us why he thanked God that he had baptized so few of the Corinthians, which was, "lest any should say that he had baptized in his own name;" lest, that is, he should have given the least occasion of division in the Corinthian Church.

St. Paul's words and acts are really a testimony to the importance of Baptism, for they teach us that it is the same, and conveys the same benefits, by whomsoever it is administered. He thanked God that he had not baptized, simply because the Baptism of *any* minister produced exactly the same effect as his, Baptism being an act of God rather than of men, and so its effect is independent of the Ecclesiastical position of the administrator.

St. Paul unquestionably looked upon teaching as his special province, if I may be allowed to use such a term, because God had given him special gifts to proclaim to

[1] This is actually the inference drawn in Mr. Ryle's tract on 'Regeneration."

the world the ingathering of the Gentiles into "one body," and he did not so regard his power to administer Sacraments, because there was nothing in it special to him, for the most obscure administrator of the Holy Communion offered to the faithful all that an Apostle could communicate to him in that Sacrament.

Even supposing that Sacraments are, in some respects, secondary, yet a secondary matter may become of primary consideration if it involves submission to God: and Sacraments involve a twofold act of submission—submission of the whole man to receive the ordinance, and submission of the heart and mind to receive the mystery.

If there be danger from abuse of Sacraments, there is danger also from abuse of preaching. So, at least, the Apostle thinks, when he speaks of the time when men "will, after their own lusts, heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears" (2 Tim. iv. 3).

I should not, however, have endeavoured at such length to show the absurdity of any comparison between preaching and Sacraments, were it not that I desired to prepare the way for the following question, and its answer.

How is it that such a comparison has been ever instituted?

It is because preaching has been regarded as an end, not as a means.

They who impugn Sacramental truth do it because they believe that preaching produces the effect which the Apostles ascribe to Sacraments.

They suppose that if a man under the influence of the preacher is enabled to exercise an act of faith in the atonement of Christ, that man's union with Christ is there and then so cemented that no Sacraments can add anything to it, and so they are only means of proclaiming it.

Here such teachers are at direct issue with Apostolic teaching, especially with St. Paul's.

For the Apostles do not teach that a man is saved as soon as he believes, even though he exercise the most lively act of faith. His salvation, if he be a heathen, is in some sense suspended till he receive the "bath of New Birth." (Titus iii. 5; 1 Peter iii.) He has to "eat the flesh of the Son of man, and to drink His blood," if he desires to dwell in Christ, and to have Christ dwelling in him (John vi. 56). He must partake of the "one bread" —the "communion of the body of Christ," if he is to have assurance of his continuance in the one body (1 Cor. x. 16, 17). He must keep Christ's commandments if he would abide in Christ's love (John xv. 10). If he bears malice or hatred in his heart, then he has no "eternal life abiding in him" (1 John iii. 15). He must walk in the light as Christ is in the light, *if* the blood of Christ is to cleanse him from all sin (1 John i. 7); and he is "made partaker of Christ, if he hold the beginning of his confidence steadfast unto the end" (Heb. iii. 14).

So that the question really is, not whether the ministers of Christ are preachers, and not priests, but what, as preachers, have they to preach and teach about such things as the Church and Sacraments.

If the ministers of Christ will but preach and teach what Christ and the Apostles taught about the Church, and the means of grace, there will be little room for instituting comparisons between their various functions, and little inclination to dispute about the name of their office.

CHAPTER XIII.

CHURCH PRINCIPLES AND FREE THOUGHT.

We shall now briefly consider how far such matters as "free thought," the "higher criticism" and "progress" affect Church principles.

Church principles are founded upon those statements of Christ and His Apostles which set forth the grace with which God is pleased to accompany the right administration and reception of the Sacraments, the ministerial commission and functions of the Apostles and subordinate ministers, and the spiritual status and privileges of the members of the mystical body.

Now I assert that all the results of modern criticism put together do not in the least degree affect the interpretation of these statements.

Of course, if the "higher criticism" were to affect the trustworthiness of the whole Bible as a reliable record of what Jesus and His Apostles said and did, it necessarily would take from the value of particular statements found in the Bible.

But beyond this, I cannot see that the proof of Church principles which we derive from Scripture is at all affected, or likely to be affected, by the results of modern criticism.

For instance, the Church, to a great extent, rests her doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration on our Lord's well-known words in His discourse with Nicodemus. If the progress of "enlightened criticism" tends to throw doubts on the historical accuracy of St. John's Gospel as a whole,

then, of course, this saying of Christ shares in the general uncertainty. The same criticism which would lead us to question the authority of John iii. 5, equally tends to shake our faith in every other matter which the Gospel reveals; as, for instance, in the Incarnation, the Resurrection of the body, and the General Judgment.

But, if it be granted, that the third chapter of this Gospel contains an accurate account of what our Saviour actually said, then no modern criticism can in the least degree affect the interpretation of John iii. 5, or weaken its force on the side of the Church view of Baptism. No manuscript gives any other reading. No ancient version gives any other rendering. No difference of translation can be honestly suggested. It is quoted as referring to Regeneration in Baptism by writers as old as Hermas and Justin Martyr. When Faustus Socinus, three hundred years ago, said that the word "water" should be understood to mean repentance, he went as far as a man can well go on the side of rationalism or "free handling."

If the Evangelist gives a faithful report of the words which Christ used, then nothing can be made of them except what the Church has made, for on the Church theory you have every word in its natural meaning taken into full account.

Rationalistic, or Puritan principles of interpretation can give no reason why our Lord, by introducing an allusion to the material element, should have set forth a less spiritual and less intellectual interpretation of the term New Birth, when, on rationalistic grounds, He ought to have given a more spiritual one.

Modern criticism or "free thought" is powerless against this statement of Christ's. It can contemptuously push aside the Church view; but, taking the words as they stand, it can suggest nothing new—nothing which older unbelief

has not long ago suggested, and which the Church has long ago rejected.

And so with the Eucharist.

All that can possibly be said in favour of the merely memorial or figurative view, was said three hundred years ago, and after all has been said, the fact remains, that on this view Christ's words are an exaggeration, for they are suggestive of some unspeakable blessing attached to the reception of His *flesh* and *blood*, when all that He really is supposed to mean, is the ordinary blessing of illumination, which is derived, not from His *flesh*, but from His *Spirit*.

These Eucharistic words are far above the reach of criticism.

Manuscripts, ancient versions, accounts of Jewish customs at the celebration of the Passover, Hebrew and Syriac philology—all these, as far as I can see, throw no one ray of light upon the mystery.

The Rationalism of the nineteenth century can say nothing which the Socinianism of Poland did not say three hundred years ago—nothing, I mean, to the point; and THE point is, that Christ chooses words which seem to attach certain benefits to the communion of His lower nature of flesh and blood, when words attaching the same benefits to the communion of His higher nature of mind and Spirit would have been more intelligible, have obviated every difficulty, and saved the Church from eighteen hundred years of misconception.

So with absolution.

Such words as "Whosesoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them," seem too plain for criticism. You might as well apply criticism to the Ten Commandments or the Beatitudes. But the plain signification of these words is unpopular, and so the line taken is to put forward something about them which sounds evangelical,

or broad, or liberal, which, in the present state of feeling, is pretty sure to be accepted, but which evades the whole difficulty. For, after every possible limitation has been taken into account, the fact remains, that the persons to whom these words were spoken had power given to them to remit or retain the sins of their brethren.

Now exactly the same objections stand against an Apostle remitting sins in the first century, as stand against any ordinary minister remitting sins in the nineteenth.

If God remits sins now altogether independently of the action of any ministry which He has ordained, so He would have done then.

If God then chose to convey forgiveness wholly, or in part, through human agency, so He would now.

These statements of Christ respecting absolution and Sacraments, have to do with the conveyance of grace from God to man, and so they must be unalterable in their application.

However outward circumstances may change, the things which relate to forgiveness, and the conveyance of grace from God to sinners, cannot change. All the progress of mankind since the crucifixion of Christ has in no wise altered the state of matters betwixt God and man.[1]

[1] "It is plain, therefore, that in divinity there cannot be a progress analogous to that which is constantly taking place in pharmacy, geology, and navigation. A Christian of the fifth century with a Bible, is neither better nor worse situated than a Christian of the nineteenth with a Bible, candour and natural acuteness being, of course, supposed equal. It matters not at all that the compass, printing, gunpowder, steam, gas, vaccination, and a thousand other discoveries and inventions which were unknown in the fifth century, are familiar to the nineteenth. None of these discoveries and inventions has the smallest bearing on the question, whether man is justified by faith alone, or whether the invocation of saints is an orthodox practice." From Lord Macaulay's "Review of Ranke's History of the Popes."

In whatever way the death of Christ was efficacious eighteen centuries ago in procuring forgiveness, so it is now.

Whatever terms respecting the reception of forgiveness God made then, He will assuredly hold to now, unless He has inaugurated some third dispensation, with credentials equal in power to those with which He commended to men's notice the first and second covenants.

If men had then to be justified by faith, so they must be now. If Baptism was joined with faith as needful, so it must be now. If Baptism was the "bath of new birth," then, so it is now. If it "saved" men in some sense then, it will save them in that sense now.

If men had then to "eat the flesh of the Son of man, and to drink His blood," in order to have eternal life, so they must now. If eating Christ's flesh and drinking Christ's blood were then the fittest terms in which to express the great hidden reality, so they are now.

If God established a ministry of reconciliation then by saying "As My Father sent me so send I you. Whosesoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them," then that ministry is in existence now, and these words set forth its commission and functions.

I cannot see that the Church has outgrown the Scripture doctrine of the Sacraments either in knowledge or in holiness.

Certainly not in knowledge, for in the days when these Sacramental truths were first enunciated, it was said to Christians, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things."

Certainly not in love or holiness, for it was said to primitive Christians by an inspired Apostle, "I am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye are full of goodness."

I cannot, for my part, find in the works of the leaders of the "free thought" movement, any progress towards a

higher or deeper theology than that of fifteen hundred years ago, but rather the reverse. This progress appears to me, not to take as its starting-point the first fact in the New Testament, and not to set before itself as its goal the one hope of the Apostles and Primitive Saints. It does not start from the Incarnation, and does not reach forth towards the Second Coming of Christ, and the Resurrection of the Body.

One raised up by God, more than fourteen hundred years ago, to defend the truth of His Son's Incarnation wrote thus :—

"Christ is shown to be the bond of unity between us and the Divine Nature, binding us to Himself as man, but as God, being by nature in God His own Father. For in no other way could the nature, subject to corruption, rise aloft to incorruption, unless the nature, superior to all corruption and change, had descended to it, lightening in a manner that which ever sunk downwards, and raising it to its own excellencies, and by communion and commingling with itself, ALL BUT UPLIFTING IT FROM THE CONDITIONS CONFORMABLE TO CREATED NATURE, and reforming, according to itself, that which is not so of itself.

"We are perfected into unity with God the Father through Christ the Mediator. For, having received into ourselves, bodily and spiritually, Him who is by nature and truly the Son, who hath an essential oneness with Him [the Father], we, becoming partakers of the nature which is above all, are glorified.[1]

In these words of St. Cyril I recognise "free thought," but then it is thought "free" to mount up. It takes hold of Scripture truths, not to pull them down to its own level, but to rise, by their help, to the top of that ladder

[1] Cyril of Alexandria, quoted in notes to Pusey's Sermon on "Real Presence," p. 644.

which reaches from earth to heaven; and that ladder is the human nature of Christ, in us, and upon the very throne of the Most High God.

If the Church has progressed beyond these thoughts and words of Cyril, that progress is assuredly not to be discovered in the leading writers of our present "free thought" school.

Their higher criticism has led them, I doubt not, to avoid certain mistakes about types and prophecies into which Cyril may have fallen, but they have it not in them to say what he says about the exaltation of human nature in that Second Adam, in Whom all His brethren who adhere to Him by a living faith are raised up and made to sit together in heavenly places. Their "free thought" may bring out well the touches of human nature with which God's word abounds—sweet these touches are, and unaccountably have they been missed by those who have professed to draw out the fulness of Scripture truth—but to reveal these is *not* the great purpose of God in Scripture; and our free thought does not take to, and is not at home in, the revelation of Divine nature, to reveal which *is* the purpose of God in the inspiration of Holy Scripture.

In writers of this school I find, as a rule, an unaccountable reticence respecting the essential Deity and Incarnation of the Son of God. Now "free thought," employing itself upon the things contained in God's word, and not taking the Incarnation into account at every turn, seems to me to be as absurd as it would be for "free thought" to busy itself upon the system of the universe, and not to take into account the attraction of gravitation.

If the Humiliation of the Eternal Son of God, in the way in which it is revealed to us in the first chapters of

SS. Matthew, Luke, and John, be a fact, if it actually took place under the circumstances there recorded, then the whole economy of which it is the beginning and root is raised up from earth to heaven.

It seems to me drivelling folly to rationalize on, and insist upon giving some commonplace meaning to Church or Sacramental doctrine, whilst you accept the Incarnation as stated in the creeds.

For if the manhood be actually taken into the Godhead in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, and if this Jesus founded a Church, then it is only in harmony with such a beginning that this Church should have some mysterious relationship to its Divine Head.

If Christ were a mere man, full of God's grace, but not the Second Person of the Eternal Trinity, then such statements as "I am the vine, ye are the branches," "Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular," "We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones," would seem highly coloured, and so not to be taken as setting forth any supernatural or mystical union. They would be, in point of fact, exaggerations. They must be diluted, if they are to accord with the prosaic reality that Christ is a divinely-gifted Socrates, and that, after all, our relationship to Him can be only that of scholars to a teacher, or of subjects to a king.

But if Christ be, in very deed, God's Only Begotten Son in our nature, then, with reverence be it spoken, no grace towards man can be too great after such a channel of grace is opened. If the Only Begotten Son took our nature that, through that nature, He might convey grace to us, then such grace cannot well be small, soon told, and its fulness easily apprehended. Then, in all reason, that Church which Christ has so closely associated with Himself in *word*, must in very deed be mystically joined to

Him; and those statements which imply some extraordinary union with Him, must be understood as if they set forth high realities which human reason cannot grasp, and human speech cannot utter, rather than commonplace matters which our reason is not only well able to grasp, but also to embody in more intelligible terms.

And as with the Church, so with the Sacraments by which the mystical union of the whole body with the Redeemer is inaugurated or cemented.

It seems to me in the highest degree irrational to tone down the words in which Christ or His Spirit set forth the mysterious functions of Sacraments, whilst we hold the infinite mystery of the Person of Him who ordained them, and whilst we are forced to admit that His words, on the face of them, seem to set before us some strange and unearthly bonds betwixt us and Him. Those words of His which have to do with His Church, and His Ministry and His Sacraments, mysterious and startling though they seem, are yet in harmony with the first fact of His economy, and with the last. The first fact, that when the King of Glory took upon Him to deliver man He did not abhor the Virgin's womb, and the last, that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

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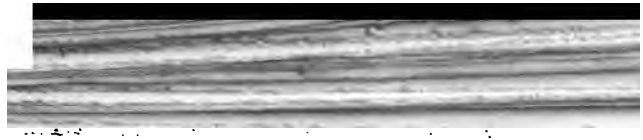

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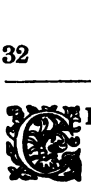

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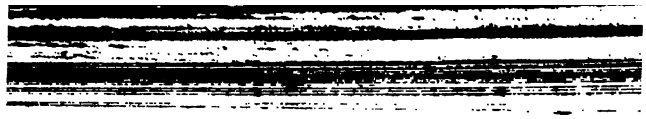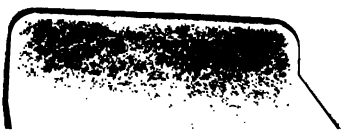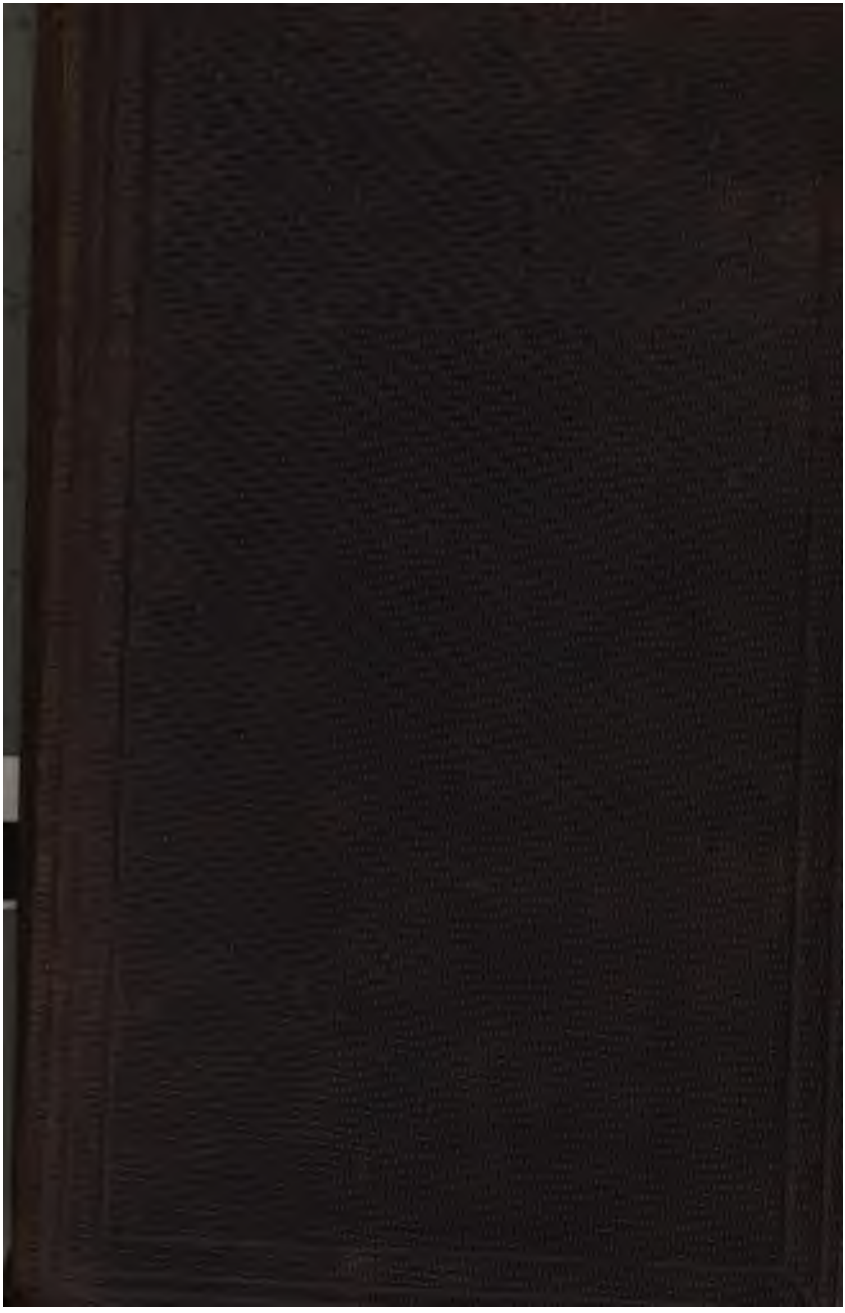
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